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MISCELLANEOUS WORKS

OF

ROBERT ROBINSON,

LATE PASTOR OF THE

BAPTIST CHURCH AND CONGREGATION

OF

PROTESTANT DISSENTERS,

AT

CAMBRIDGE;

IN FOUR VOLUMES:

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED

BRIEF MEMOIRS OF HIS LIFE AND WRITINGS.

VOL. IV.

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ON

VARIOUS OCCASIONS.

[FIRST SEPARATELY PRINTED.]

SERMON VII.

THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

Preached at *Salter's Hall, London,* September 11, 1782. In behalf of the BIBLE SOCIETY.

2 TIMOTHY iii. 15.

The Holy Scriptures are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith, which is in Christ Jesus.

IF ever there were a public charity, to the support of which persuasion was unnecessary, this, which I have the honour to propose to you to-day, in the name of the BIBLE SOCIETY, is one. *It commends itself to every man's conscience in the sight of God.* My design, therefore, is more to confirm such as do support this benevolent institution, than to convert those who do not. If, indeed, we were infidels, and denied the truth of the proposition contained in the text; or if we were immoral persons, insensible of the worth of virtue, and its companion, felicity; if we were unanimated with the manly passion of diffusing happiness among all our species by means of virtue, and of producing virtue by communicating knowledge; then should we remain dead to all the holy emotions inspired by the text; but as we believe what our apostle affirms for truth, believe it as he, who affirmed it, did, our faith, like his, must work by love to all mankind. Let us hear him.

The holy scriptures are able to make thee wise

unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. By *the holy scriptures* the apostle means, as he informs us in the next verse, *all writings given by inspiration of God.* In these the apostle suggests in the text, agreeably to his express declarations in many other passages, *Jesus Christ* is the chief subject, and makes the principal figure, every where projecting to meet the eye of the reader. Moses writes of him; of him bear all the prophets witness; and with evangelists and apostles he is all in all. The holy scriptures, which thus hold forth to public view the Lord Jesus Christ, *are able to make men wise,* that is, to teach them to judge rightly of God, a wisdom which is *unto salvation,* for it begins by saving us from error, vice, and misery, and it ends in the salvation, that is, the resurrection of the body, and the perfection of the soul. These benefits, the apostle adds, are communicated to us *through faith,* in other words, the holy scriptures exhibit a prophet, whose doctrine must be understood, a priest whose merit must be trusted, a prince, whose laws must be obeyed; or, in words yet more plain, ignorant and vicious men become wise, and good, and happy, by reading, hearing, examining, understanding, and believing the truths taught in the holy scriptures.

If we thus enter into the sentiments of the inspired writer of our text, we shall be confirmed in the pious resolution of continuing to support this institution, a charity extracted from the very spirit of the text. The objects of your benevolence

are the lower orders of military men, the soldiers in the army, and the sailors in the navy; a brave, I wish I could add a pious set of men; for skill and courage the glory, but for profligacy the shame of Britain. This useful order of men, however, deserve respect, and you have wisely expressed your esteem for them by presenting them with the BIBLE; for all the qualities of good military men are inculcated there; and there they are so inculcated as to render additional instruction not absolutely necessary to salvation; so that your society do honour to their understandings by presenting the bible ONLY, for *the holy scriptures*, THE HOLY SCRIPTURES ALONE, *are able to make us wise unto salvation, through faith, which is in Christ Jesus.*

What the apostle affirms of the inspired writings in general, that they [make the good man *perfect, and thoroughly furnish him unto all good works,* may with the strictest propriety be applied to this particular class of men. Let us, first, examine what are the necessary qualities of a military man; and let us inquire whether the holy scriptures inculcate such dispositions.

We begin with *piety*, or the worship of God. To be pious is to entertain just notions of God, to exercise proper affections towards him, and to perform such public actions as express our dependence on him, and our reverence for him. Even pagans thought this so necessary, that they neither begun nor ended a war without public sacrifices expressive of their attention to the supreme power, that governed the universe. Men who live among

fires and flames, sieges and battles, storms and tempests, and shipwrecks and instruments of death, how can such men dispense with the obligations of piety? If all men ought to fear and worship God for their own sakes, how much more this class of men, who are exposed to more deaths than others, and who have fewer hopes than others have of the cool, deliberate moments of conversion, in their last agonies? A principle of religion is necessary, too, for our sakes, for we arm and empower these men to guard our lives, liberties, and properties, and we are only so far happy under their protection as they appear to possess such qualities as render them proper objects of our confidence. A man who fears God may be trusted; but he, who, doth not fear him, seldom pays a proper regard to his fellow citizens; his conscience is not bound by the religion of an oath.

Aware of the necessity of piety, we present a bible to military men, as the book of all others in the world, the best constructed to form in the mind just notions of God, and so to excite pious emotions in the heart, and to regulate the actions of life. Here the first cause of all things visible and invisible displays his true and real character, as the creator, the preserver, the redeemer, the judge of mankind, diffusing his perfections through all his works. In one doctrine he is an object of fear, in another of love; in one event he displays his power, in another his pity, in all his infinite tenderness for the noblest of all his creatures, man. So far hath God carried his condescension to

us, that he hath given us his own express image in the person of Jesus Christ, *God manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.*

That display of the character of God, which the holy scriptures exhibit in the person of Christ, most powerfully impels men to piety. His advent was foretold by prophets, and prophecy is a grand display of the omniscience of God. His presence was announced by miracles, and miracles wrote on the winds and the waves, the diseased and the dead, are noble exhibitions of omnipotence. His doctrine is an emanation of the purest and most perfect wisdom. His holy example exhibits moral excellence in a manner impellent and irresistible. In one word, *God in Christ* is God *reconciling the world unto* the purity of his nature, and the perfection of his government. As, then, piety becomes a military man, because he is under all the obligations that bind other men, and some others peculiar to himself, so the bible is calculated to excite him to discharge these duties, by exhibiting to him a supreme being, who places his glory in guarding the liberties, and preserving the lives of mankind.

Secondly: we call *magnanimity* a military virtue, and we affirm, the bible is calculated to inspire men with it. Magnanimity is elevation of soul, a great and noble way of thinking. It is owing to the poverty of language, that we apply the terms great and little to the soul; however, there

is a truth in the fact of which we speak; for whether it be owing to a particular construction of the body, or to modes of education, or to conditions of life, or to any other cause, certain it is, some men have diminutive ideas of every thing, and others an enlarged sublime habit of thinking. Gentlemen in a military line of life have more opportunities than others of obtaining great and manly ideas, for they are familiar with men and manners in wide extremes, with winds and waves, and heights and depths, and dangers and pleasures, of which inexperience has no idea. They are often in conditions, which require sudden and singular exertions, and such circumstances draw out the latent powers of the soul. It is not the acquisition of an acre, it is the protection of a kingdom; it is not the decline of an individual, it is the subversion of an empire; it is not a journey of a day, it is a voyage round the globe, that occupy the minds of such men. A mean, selfish soul, enslaved by vulgar prejudices, and bound by sordid interest to one patron, or one party, is not fit to inhabit the body of a Briton in arms; he could neither enter into the views of his constituents, nor discharge the duties of his office, nor encounter the difficulties of his condition. Such a man's mind should be the residence of all those just and generous ideas, which make the universe happy, and which go to make up the genuine British constitution.

The holy scriptures are admirably adapted to enlarge the minds of men. The historical part car-

ries them back to the most remote antiquity, and the prophecies of the New Testament set them a thinking of long periods yet to come. The doctrine of God gives them an object to contemplate, infinite and unsearchable. The doctrine of providence gives them the whole universe to study, in wide extremes, from the properties of angels to the instincts of reptiles, the whole intermediate spaces occupied by various orders of beings, *heavens covered with his glory, earth full of his praise.* The doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments, the resurrection of the dead, the judgment of the world, the highest happiness in heaven, the utmost misery in hell, all these train up the disciples of revelation in a habit of thinking truly sublime.

To men conversant with eternity, how short doth human life appear! To a mind surveying the world, comparing being with being, and rationally giving the superiority to intelligence, how natural is the exclamation, *what shall it profit a man to gain the whole world, and lose his own soul! or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*

As the doctrines of the holy scriptures expand and elevate the mind; as objects of pleasure and pain exhibited there excite noble emotions in the heart, so the duties of religion imply noble exertions every way worthy of a great and good man. To *rule our own spirits*—to deny *ourselves*—to *cut off* a right hand—to forgive *our enemies*—to bless them that *curse us*—never to *forget* to do good and to communicate—to flee from wrath *to come*

—to *lay hold* on eternal life—to live, yet not to live, but to have *Christ* live in us—all these duties demand great exertions, and all imply superior habits of thinking, in a word, christian magnanimity. If magnanimity be a virtue, christian magnanimity is that virtue in its most refined state; and what is it in a military man, but an imitation of that friend of mankind, who exposed his life to inconveniences and hardships, and who expired in the prime of his days on a cross for the public good?

We call *love of his country* a third qualification of a military man; and if there be a country which demands the warmest affection of men bearing arms it is this, of which we have the happiness to be natives. I do not mean an attachment to soil and seasons, nor a fondness for the language, the dress, the customs, the amusements of our native spot: a high regard for all these would be, perhaps, commendable, at least, excusable in us; nor do I intend a preference to the learning, politeness, and refinements of our native district; but I mean love to that in our country, which only renders a country desirable—A FREE CONSTITUTION.

In countries where despotism debases human nature, the people are held in slavery by fear, and on this principle the military is a distinct order, bred to the profession of arms. There a standing army is necessary to the splendour, perhaps to the being of a tyrant, who, divested of this engine of government, would become the ridicule or the execration of mankind. In such a state, the accom-

plishment of a soldier is not love of his country; but servile submission to sovereign caprice.

In our free constitution, the direct end of which is civil liberty, our laws know no such state as that of a perpetual standing soldier. With us military men are fellow citizens, who for a while, when the representatives of the people require it, take up arms to defend a country, both theirs and ours. The safety and happiness of the whole state is the grand principle, on which we allow force necessary to a free people; and on this principle we employ military men, not to inspire us with fear, nor to restrain us from any lawful pursuit, nor even to enforce our laws; but to guard our liberties, lives, and properties from all invaders.

Some have pretended to accuse the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ for not inculcating patriotism. Benevolence, say they, universal love, citizenship of the world, is the doctrine of your gospel; your gospel therefore is not divine. We grant revealed religion does inculcate universal love; but if we be taught to love the whole, we are necessarily taught to love each component part, and consequently we are taught to love that part which gave us birth. We allow, the gospel doth not inspire us with enthusiasm for local circumstances; it teacheth us to despise the magick of names, so fatal to Greeks, Romans, and Jews, and it bids us take him for *a Jew, who is one inwardly, whose circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God;* it directs us to unite with all wise

and good men for all the social purposes, for which Jesus Christ came into the world. Christianity, we allow, is a religion, and not a system of civil government: but this religion, destructive of all sin, spends much of its force in eradicating those sinful principles, which support despotism, and in cherishing such virtuous dispositions as uphold a free constitution of civil government.

How easy it would be to enlarge on this subject! how easy to place in public view the dispositions of a tyrant and a slave, and the spirit of christianity, in direct opposition to both! How easy to justify, on the principles of the gospel, all the noble exertions of the citizens of free states for obtaining and perpetuating civil liberty! Let it suffice, at present to observe in brief, that the whole of christianity was not proposed in the form of a code of laws, by ambassadors from heaven, to earthly princes, to be incorporated into systems of civil government; but, on the contrary, it was in its miracles an address to the senses, and it continues to be in its doctrines an appeal to the reason of all mankind. In the former supposition religion would have been enforced by authority, and submission to orders would have been instead of faith and obedience; and this would have made christianity congenial to arbitrary government. In the latter case, which is ours, a British citizen may give a Bible to a British soldier in perfect consistency with all the principles that constitute a new testament church, and a free state. A soldier, by reading, will soon discover, that the principal interposition

of God in the old Testament, was to bring a nation out of that *house of bondage*, Egypt, into the liberty of being governed by laws of their own; and that the principal event in the NewTestament was the appearance of a special messenger from heaven to announce redemption to all mankind. With the strictest propriety, then, we conclude, that, as love of a *free* country is a military virtue, so the Bible is calculated to inspire it.

It would be inexcusable to omit, in the next place, *courage*, as a necessary accomplishment of a military man; and it would be unjust to the Bible to say, it inculcated timidity. Fortitude includes strength of body, and firmness of mind; the holy scriptures inculcate the first by teaching us temperance, and they inculcate the last by directing all men to act on principle, on good principle, on principle of their own.

A religion, that chases away ignorance, and lays down fixed truths, to be examined, believed, and placed as grounds of action; a religion that takes away guilt, and publishes pardon of sin; a religion, that opens immediate happiness even in this life to every one of its disciples; a religion that weighs the world in a scale, and all that men call glory in a balance, and estimates every particle according to its true value; a religion that disarms death, closes hell, and opens a heaven of ineffable bliss; a religion, that proposes so many eminent examples of fortitude to our imitation; a religion, that declares *all things shall work together for good to them that love God, neither death, nor*

life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor heighth, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, such a religion may well inspire its disciples with fortitude, it may well make them face all dangers in the path of duty, it may well *make the feeble like Davids, and Davids like angels of God,* it may well embolden each to exclaim, with an eminent hero of old, *Should such a man as I flee ?*

Lastly: to omit many, we consider *humanity* as an accomplishment necessary to soldiers and sailors. Kind and gentle affections are not incompatible with that stern heroism, which some offices of life require, yea, history affords us numerous examples of humane and generous actions, performed by men of the most resolute and daring abilities; nor have great warriors ever confounded war and cruelty together; the first is often necessary, the last never. The lives of military men are spent among objects of distress; abroad, straits and difficulties innumerable, wants, diseases, and deaths in a thousand shapes preying upon themselves and their companions, fading and destroying the flower of mankind; at home, greyheaded merit overlooked and unrewarded, or, if rewarded, sacrificing the last days of a life spared by miracle, in temples of debauchery and excess. What occasions for the exercise of humane dispositions? Even among enemies, when a man is sent as an instrument to execute the just resentment of a whole injured na-

tion against foreign invaders of their rights, how necessary is humanity, especially toward the innocent, who are not unfrequently involved in the calamities of the guilty !

Let such a man take up the holy scriptures, and read, and let him not start at those parts of Jewish history, in which humanity in war seems to have no place. The same book that relates these exploits, informs us, that he, who never acts without the most consummate reason, gave extraordinary commands to those heroes to suspend in these particular cases the exercise of humanity. Dreadful commission ! *Thou shalt consume all the people, thine eye shall have no pity upon them.* At present we have no extraordinary commissions; but we have a general law of justice and humanity; *whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye also to them, for this is the law and the prophets.*

In fine, the holy scriptures are able *thoroughly to furnish* all military men *to every good work ;* they are able to do more, they *are able to make them wise unto salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus ;* and on this principle we praise this society for giving our soldiers and sailors bibles *only.*

Far be it from us to depreciate the labours of learned, or pious men. Their publications have their worth, because they have their use. Far be it from us to insinuate, that human expositions of divine truths are useless; they do good both heard and read. We only affirm, that uninspired wri-

tings are not necessary to salvation, and that to men, in such circumstances as the military are, the bible alone is sufficient to answer every desirable purpose, and more would be an inconvenience.

When we affirm, the holy scriptures alone are able to make us wise unto salvation, we do not mean to exclude divine influence. Much is daily said concerning the work of the holy spirit; but the truth is, we have no dispute concerning the work of the holy spirit, for divine influence is allowed on all hands; but our difference is concerning the *mode* of the work in question. Doth the holy spirit convert the soul by a positive act of power, or doth he inform the mind, and change the heart by means of scripture truths? A positive act of power would produce an occult quality, for which we have no name, and of which we know no use. A scripture truth, demonstrating itself to the understanding, produces a just idea in the mind, a picture of itself, and then the doctrine stands true in the mind, or becomes our faith. The belief of this truth produces proper emotions in the heart. If it be the truth of divine forgiveness, so admirably adapted to excite pleasure, we hope and rejoice: if it be the truth of divine displeasure, so well calculated to inspire fear, we tremble and flee from wrath to come. This plain and artless process wants nothing to recommend it to many christians except perplexity and mystery, too long habituated, alas! to consider obscurity as a character of piety!

According to our best divines, the work of the

holy spirit consists of two parts, the first they call external, this is the proposing of the truths of revelation either by speaking or writing: the other they call internal, and this is the disposing of the mind and heart to receive truths of revelation. As I may avoid fire without feeling its effects, so I may avoid the truths of christianity; but I cannot admit them without admitting at the same time the effects, which the belief of these truths never fails to produce. On these principles the apostle in the text connects salvation with faith alone, because faith is not alone, but is inseparably connected with repentance, and love, and zeal, and good works, and every other christian excellence: and on these principles we praise the understandings of those, who give sailors bibles *only*, because the gift implies several just and honourable principles; principles, I mean, which do honour to the understandings and hearts of those, who admit them.

First: this donation implies, that in the opinion of the donors, the bible is a *plain*, easy book; either that all the truths of revelation are simple, plain, and clear, or that such truths as are essential to salvation are so. This is a very just notion of revelation; for a revelation intended, as this is by its divine author, to be universally read, examined and understood by all orders of men, if it wanted perspicuity, would not answer the end of the writer. Perspicuity is a character of all good writing, and the holy scriptures bear this mark in the most conspicuous manner. The sub-

jects are clear, the language is plain, the imagery is just and striking. The nature and perfections of God, the superintendance of providence, the folly, the guilt, the misery of sin, the purity and perfection of the law, the depravity of human nature, the imperfection of unassisted knowledge and obedience, the nature and offices of Christ, the place and use of scripture, the influence of the holy spirit, the nature and necessity of faith and obedience, the promise of eternal life to the righteous, the threatening of endless punishments to the wicked, the resurrection of the dead, and the final judgment, how clear and explicit are the oracles of God on all these important subjects! Strictly speaking, there are no mysteries in revelation to be believed, for where nothing is affirmed, there is nothing to be believed or denied. That the dead shall rise is affirmed, the resurrection of the dead is therefore an article of the christian faith; but with what body the dead shall come is not declared, and therefore the mode of the resurrection is not a mystery to be believed, but a subject to be left, where revelation leaves it, to be unfolded by the event itself at the last day. The same may be said of many other articles, which custom hath taught us to call mysteries. Some pretended mysteries are not scripture propositions at all, but mere creatures of the schools. Others called mysteries are contained in scripture, but are not mysteries; the Lord's supper never was accounted a mystery till transubstantiation made it so. Other articles, again are revealed in the truth of

the fact, but not in the mode of effecting it. One doctor of learned leisure may start points, and raise difficulties, another of the same class may investigate them, a third may defend, and a fourth may deny, and all in the eagerness of disputing particulars may miss the general design of revelation: while the plain, blunt sailor, happily unacquainted with their insurmountables, by the mere exercise of his own good sense, will take in the general design of the book, and firmly believe, that *without* evangelical *holiness no man shall see the Lord.*

Secondly: the donation of a bible only, implies, that each reader hath *a right of private judgment.* This is another just notion, truly scriptural, and entirely protestant. To give a man a book to read, and to deny him the right of judging of its meaning, seems the summit of absurdity. What pity that such absurdity should not be universally exploded! A right founded in nature, attached inalienably by the God of nature to the very existence of mankind, openly avowed and confirmed by scripture, constantly exercised by all, even by such as deny it (for who does not think for himself?) this right, I say, cannot be evaded without the greatest inconsistency. It is not a favour conceded by one man to another, it is a right inherent, held immediately of the God of nature, the property and the dignity of all mankind. The utmost exercise of this right cannot endanger either any of the great principles of morality, or any of the essential doc-

trines of christianity, or any of the noble principles, that constitute the happiness of civil society. I will not affirm the same of scholastic theses, and human inventions; but of what vast importance are they! Suppose a sailor should not think of them? what then?

To close: the donation of a bible only, argues *a freedom from party zeal.* Here the great design of God in giving a revelation of his mind and will is kept in view. No little selfish ends are proposed. The inspired writers are not retained, and disguised, to serve secular views. They are left to make their own way, to tell their own tale, to support their own credit, or to speak more properly, to maintain the honour of that God, who gave them such credentials as his infinite wisdom and his tenderest compassion thought best fitted to effect the purpose of their mission. That christian seems to me to enter thoroughly into the spirit of revelation, who dare trust the holy scriptures alone to convince and convert a sinner from the error of his way.

Christians, we have been considering the *sufficiency* of the holy scriptures, with a particular view to our soldiers and sailors, and I flatter myself, I have not wandered very far from the design of this society, who, in the papers put into your hands to day, give it as their opinion, that " the bible is the infallible word of God, which when attended with a divine blessing, will be the means of making the army and the navy better members of society, and inspire them with real courage to defend their country, especially in times of danger."

With this view the society, which was only instituted in 1780, have distributed, at the charge of upwards of fifteen hundred pounds, more than eleven thousand bibles among our regiments and ships crews. May God crown their efforts with success, and may an hundred fold be returned into their bosoms !

How pleasing, at least how alleviating and mollifying are the reflections, which rise out of the doctrine of the sufficiency of the holy scriptures, under the misfortunes to which we often hear our brave countrymen are exposed. I sometimes fancy I see an old British sailor, having spent his days in the service of his country, sink under the weight of age and infirmities, and, during a voyage, sickening, and hastening to die. Alone in his hammock he reviews his life, and conscience condemns it as *evil, only evil continually.* God, who till now had not been in all his thoughts, seems to summon him to an impartial judgment. He feels he cannot live, and he knows he is not fit to die. Great is his misery upon him. The pains of dissolving nature are aggravated by the agonies of his mind, oppressed with an intolerable load of guilt. Recollections of blasphemies, debaucheries, and cruelties cleave his soul asunder. In this moment an honest messmate comes, pity in his heart, and frankness in his eye, bringing in his hand the holy scriptures, the message of Almighty God to the wretched, communicated by your charity to the ship, and reads him these words. *As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of*

the wicked. When I say unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die, if he turn from his sin, he shall not die, none of his sins, that he hath committed, shall be mentioned unto him. God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. Come now, let us reason together, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. Instantly a new world opens to his view. God is no longer the inexorable judge; he speaks the language of a compassionate parent, vehemently concerned for the welfare of his child. This rebellious son melts at his voice, repents and believes the gospel, throws himself into the arms of divine clemency, and with his last breath mixes his adorations of God with blessings on you his benefactors, by whose means the scriptures made him wise unto salvation. All this is possible. I ask no more. The possibility of administering such relief to a fellow creature in such distress is enough for me.

I sometimes fancy I see a shipwreck, all the crew except one lost, and he thrown upon a desolate island, the waters casting up along with him one of your bibles upon the beach. What can the bible do for this poor man? Let us pause. After his first excesses have subsided; after he hath found what at first he could not comprehend, that he could live on the fruits, and sleep in the shade,

which the island affords, let us suppose him sitting under a bush, and reading ; *The most high doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what doest thou ? The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works. The eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season. The Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down. The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee.* Would not such information as this put into his heart, if not a joy unspeakable and full of glory, yet a calm resignation to the will of providence, which in his condition would be of more value than the whole world. Were such a man to enter into the spirit of the holy scriptures, when he saw the carcases of his late companions floating on the waves, he would hear one voice saying to him, *Be still, and know that I am God;* and another subjoining, *Behold the goodness and severity of God, on them severity, but towards thee goodness.* I repeat it again, all this is possible, and possibility is ground of action here.

Brethren, was it a prospect of possible good, or was it a foresight of the late unhappy fate of the Royal George, that induced you to act as you did? That was the first ship, to which you gave bibles. When she sunk, there were four hundred bibles aboard. Whether the men made a proper use of

them or not, you have done your part. I am happy to be able to say, that, by letters from some on board that ship, written before the sad event, and which I have been reading again this morning, there is sufficient ground to believe that the holy scriptures had made some of that crew wise unto salvation. *When the sea shall give up her dead,* perhaps you may have the honour of saying to the judge, *Behold us, and the children, whom thou hast given us!* Had you read the book of fate, and foreseen this melancholy event, you could not have acted a more friendly part than to prepare the sufferers for death by means of the holy scriptures. If such men must sink to rise no more, if the sea must devour, if that great grave must never say, *it is enough,* the least we can do is to prepare men, who for our sakes live suspended by a thread over it, to *die daily.* And you widows and orphans of this lost family, left, many of you, to public charity, flee to the holy scriptures as to the only refuge of the distressed. We will not irritate your griefs by examining your wounds. There is, they say, something sacred in misery. We, like Job's friends, will *sit down with you, none will speak a word to you:* but each will *rend his mantle,* and *sprinkle dust upon his head toward heaven.* Hard is the heart that does not feel for you, and harder still is that heart which feels nothing for thousands, who may be next month in the condition of your departed relations, sunk in the merciless ocean beyond recovery, sunk to rise no more!

SERMON VIII.

A DISCOURSE

Addressed to the congregation at *Maze-Pond, Southwark,* on their public declaration of having chosen Mr. JAMES DORE their Pastor, March 25, 1784.

THE fifty-fourth chapter of Isaiah, which was just now read to you, contains a prophecy of a great event expressed in figures the most just and affecting.

THE event foretold is the conversion of the pagan world to the knowledge and worship of one living and true God, *the Holy One of Israel,* and *the God of the whole earth.* This event, of the greatest importance to us, we see accomplished in this assembly to day. The figures under which this subject is described and illustrated, are just, fine, and expressive. Can we imagine a person more pitiable than a lone female, oppressed with afflictions, *grieved in spirit,* and exposed at once to the displeasure of God, and injustice of men; or, as the prophet speaks, *tossed with tempests and not comforted?* This wretched person is not only relieved, but elevated to rank, and placed by the Creator, (who, with great condescension, calls himself her *husband,* to describe protection on his part aud obligation on hers,) in a palace well built, highly ornamented, and inhabited by a family all

taught of the Lord. Of such a society, *established in righteousness,* and *far from oppression,* the prophet exclaims, *Great shall be the peace!*

The glory of the whole, however, is, that, as the prophet declares, this state of religion among the Gentiles should not resemble that among the Jews: for the jewish œconomy was local and temporary, fixed to a place and limited to a time; but the christian œconomy should not be succeeded by a more perfect dispensation, but should stand in finished perfection for ever. *This is as the waters of Noah unto me; for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah shall no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee.*

Who that sees the ancient prophecies accomplished, the descendants of Japheth dwelling in the tents of Shem, *Gentiles* formerly *carried away unto dumb idols,* as our ancestors in this island were, now *saying that Jesus is the Lord,* formerly *aliens from the common-wealth of Israel,* strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope and without God in the world, now built upon the foundation of the ancient apostles of Christ, and prophets of the Jews, and incorporated with them into one religious society devoted to the worship of one God, and directed by one divine revelation; who, I say, can see this, as we do to day,

and resist the enthusiasm of the prophet, *break forth into singing and cry aloud, thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, the Holy One of Israel shall be called the God of the whole earth!*

While we congratulate you, as we sincerely do, on the accomplishment of this prophecy in general, I flatter myself, I need not inform you, that we rejoice with this church in particular, as partakers of the common benefit. We are not come to transact the business of this society; but to enjoy the pleasure of hearing how you yourselves have transacted it. We knew and respected your late teacher, who finished his edifying life two years ago; and we know, you have now chosen another to succeed him; and as you wish to hold christian communion with the churches, to which we have the honour to belong, you have invited us to behold your faith and order. For this purpose we are come: but before we enter immediately on the subject, I shall comply with your request, and state the general reasons of our practice.

The whole practice of our religion is founded on the one great principle of SELF GOVERNMENT, and as we affirm that every individual hath a right to judge for himself in matters of religion and conscience, so we affirm that every religious society hath a right to judge for itself in all matters of faith and discipline without the controul of any man or set of men whatever. In order to explain and illustrate this subject, I will state four facts, or rather one fact in four different degrees of succes-

sion, and establish this fact by shewing you the injustice of all efforts to alter it.

First: It is a fact, that the revelation, which contains the whole of our religion, was taught in public by prophets, apostles, and Jesus Christ, and written and published to the world with many exhortations to all men to read and examine it. Every person therefore may read the bible, the whole bible. This is the first fact.

The second is, every reader may judge of what he reads, and it is the glory of revelation that it contains plain truth, easy to be understood, and free from all mystery. Strictly speaking, the old testament is an introduction to the gospel, and the acts, the epistles, and the book of revelation are an exposition of the gospel: the gospel itself is contained in the writings of the four evangelists, one history of glad tidings reported by four credible witnesses. We do not say, there is no mystery connected with the gospel, for every thing in the universe hath something mysterious belonging to it: but we do affirm that there are no incomprehensible mysteries in the gospel itself, and that where there are mysteries, it is no part of our religion to determine concerning them. Put the gospel into the hand of any man of plain common sense, and he will instantly perceive, that there is one just and good God, that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world, that salvation is attainable only in a course of moral obedience, and that moral obedience rises out of a belief of the doctrines taught by Jesus Christ, such as a state of future rewards

and punishments, and so on. Of all these subjects every reader may and ought to think and judge for himself. This is a second fact.

We affirm, thirdly, that every man, who hath formed his own judgment of the truths of christianity, may reduce his knowledge to practice. He hath a right to perform every duty of piety towards God, every act of justice and mercy to his fellow creatures, and every duty of temperance, chastity, and propriety towards himself. He may read the scriptures; he may pray to God, and praise him; he may copy the whole imitable part of the life of Christ, and no man hath a right to controul him. This is a third fact.

The fourth is, that two such christians, or ten, or twenty, or an hundred, or any number may by joint consent meet and associate together for public worship, and may sing, pray, teach and be taught, baptize and be baptised, administer and receive the Lord's supper, give alms and receive them, and appoint whom they please to arrange and transact all their religious affairs without the interference of any persons not of their society. This freedom is the birthright of all mankind, and the full exercise of it is an honour to every christian, who hath the spirit to claim and defend it.

Many efforts under various goodly pretences have been made to deprive the disciples of Christ of this liberty: but as they are the last to resign, so they are the first to justify the claim of civil and religious liberty both for themselves and for all mankind. There are many ways of reducing all

the pleas of intolerance to annihilation; at present we will consider the subject of tyranny in its PRINCIPLES, and will endeavour to show you the futility of each. Tyranny over conscience proceeds from six pretended sources of dominion, of which the following is a brief detail.

The first is *power*. From the days of Nimrod to the present time mankind have been possessed with the rage of subduing one another. The history of every country is a history of oppression, and when a successful tyrant argues from conquest to conscience, the greater his dignity, the more contemptible his logic appears. Thus he reasons: I have destroyed a navy, routed an army, burnt an hundred cities, ravaged a fine country, committed a thousand murders, and therefore Jesus Christ is God: or on the contrary, I have performed all these exploits, and therefore Jesus Christ is not God. Ridiculous as this may appear, it is too true, and, what will appear more ridiculous still, there have been found many learned hirelings, who have acted the part of grave apologists for this kind of despotism in the name and for the honour of Almighty God. If christians could be silent in this case, even pagans, who understand the civil and political rights of mankind, would cry out, of injustice, oppression and wrong, and would make a distinction between power and right. If the strongest have a right to give law to the weakest, then murder is an established law as old as the days of Cain: but *we have not so learned Christ*. His dominion is founded in power;

but it is the power of conviction produced by the irresistible strength of argument and demonstration.

A second source of tyranny over conscience is *law*. It is a maxim of sound civil government, that collective bodies of men ought to be regulated only by laws of their own making, either in person or by their representatives, and no rules of action called laws ought to be imposed on any people without their consent. When, therefore, law is urged against liberty of conscience, we object in regard to modern laws that they are against the consent of a free people, who never do, or ever can cooly and deliberately agree to the destruction of their own understanding and conscience; and in regard to ancient and obsolete law, we ask what possible right our ancestors could have to dispose of our understandings and consciences? Two hundred years ago the powers that were, believed original sin and predestination. Very proper, they followed their own convictions. But when they departed this life, they left orders that we, and all posterity should believe as they did, whether we followed our own convictions or not. Such orders may be sanctified with the name of laws, but they subvert the great law of nature, *for all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them, for this is the law.*

What renders this human legislation more unreasonable is, that the men, who assumed authority to give laws of belief to posterity, had them-

selves exemplified the direct contrary by freeing themselves from pagan and popish laws made for them by their ancestors. Whether it were want of understanding, or want of courage, we leave to the historian to determine; and for our parts we content ourselves with affirming, that we were born as free as they, and have as much right to follow our own convictions in religion as Adam in paradise had. *One is your master, even Christ, and all ye,* in all ages, *are brethren.*

A third source of dominion is *patronage.* Our ancestors were conquerors, who subdued and divided the land, and established the feudal system, the system of all Europe. The great lords considered their vassals as property, and conveyed them to one another along with the cattle and the soil. When religion was thought necessary to the civilization of the people, the lords of manors built churches for the convenience of their dependents, endowed them with lands and tithes, presented incumbents, and became patrons of the livings. Thus the lord of the soil through all generations is the sole judge of religion, and the inhabitants are never supposed to have any knowledge or choice. Acquiescence and submission are the only virtues of the people, virtues not distinguishable from vices, and vices that never prevail except in people destitute of every idea of religious liberty. Christian worship is plain, simple, and cheap, always within the reach of the poor; endowments therefore are unnecessary, and it should seem always vicious in their effects. As there is a patronage by law in

some churches, so there is a patronage by influence in other churches, and ours, which are in no danger from the first, are always exposed to the last; and without great care men of fortune will unwarily slide into power, and reduce the religion of a community to the will of one member, or perhaps to the caprice of others of his family who are not members. If we love religious freedom, let us be content with a plain worship as our own industry can furnish, and then having no occasion for emoluments we shall be independent and free. Were we obliged to resign either the choice of a physician, or that of a teacher, we would by no means give up the latter; for the worst an unskilful physician could do would be to destroy the body, while an ignorant teacher might mislead us and our families, palliate error, introduce immorality, and so ruin us in a future state. In our churches the free choice of our own teachers hath always been accounted one of our chief privileges; but even this may be productive of evil, as we shall observe in the next article.

Office is a fourth source of dominion over conscience. The distinction of christians into clergy and laity is groundless, and there is no mention of any such thing in the gospel; but, on the contrary, all christians are put on a level in all matters of religion. The word *clergy* is taken from jewish history; and the word *laity* is a greek word signifying people, and both these words in propriety of speech ought to be banished from chris-

tian churches; for if the one stands for dominion, divine right of officiating, sacredness of character, or any thing of this kind, we allow of no such things; and if the other signifies a state of submission, we equally disclaim it. In the christian church every one who can teach may teach; and if the brethren appoint one of their number to teach them, they convey no indelible character; the affair is merely human, and like all other offices originates and terminates in the choice of the people. What a pity it is that a few plain christians cannot appoint a man to read and expound the scriptures, and to administer the ordinances of religion in their assembly, but he shall instantly imagine himself transformed into a being of a superior order, affect wisdom, keep state, consider himself as having a divine right to do so, call his brethren laymen, and become the dictator and the tyrant of all who dispute his oracles! No church hath a power to create an universal officer, and it would be as just for a single society to appoint an universal deacon as it is to create an universal teacher. These odious distinctions of clergy and laity are pretences for dominion over conscience; but unless we choose to have it so they are nothing more. A christian minister is in the pulpit a teacher, at a church meeting the chairman, when he administers ordinances a servant, when he visits he is a friend, and I know of nothing more.

A fifth pretence to domineer in religion is taken from *learning*. We respect literature, and wish they who boast of it had as much as they think

they have. Languages, mathematics, knowledge of the belles lettres, and all parts of a learned and polite education render a man great and respectable in all cases except in that of inferring that these acquirements give him a right to dictate in matters of conscience. It is a question with some of great name whether the christian religion have received most good or most harm from learned men, and they incline to the latter, and urge in proof the vexatious disputes, which hard words, pretended mysteries, metaphysical distinctions and scholastical definitions, in the name of orthodoxy, have introduced among good men. We will not investigate this subject; but we do affirm that pedantry and tyranny are generally connected together, and that even literature with all its charms (and too much cannot be said in commendation of it) is no title to dominion.

The last pretence to tyrannize is taken from *piety*, and often from pretended piety. A man who only pretends to religion, and who is really a hypocrite hath the assurance to build one pretence on another, and to direct a practice, of which he knows nothing but the name, and to which he is a perpetual disgrace. There are others, who in the judgment of charity may be good men (I do not say wise men) and who make their own religion a continual source of sorrow to their fellow christians. Little souls! they think themselves privy counsellors of the King of kings, and in his name start difficulties, make childish distinctions, place

religion in trifles, and turn the whole practice of piety into a *strife of words* to no profit but to the subverting of the hearers. No men more zealous than these for their own sentiments; but no men so inimical to the liberty of others. Could such people reason, they would perceive that the same arguments which vindicate their own liberty establish that of all mankind; but they either cannot or will not reason, and always mistake zeal for justice, heat for right. It is remarkable that Jesus Christ, the most eminent for piety, discovered nothing of this bitterness, but was the most gentle and liberal of mankind, the express image of his heavenly Father. How unaccountable! but there is no accounting for some people! that a man should presume to exercise that spirit of persecution after he becomes a good man, to which before he durst not have discovered the least disposition; for the whole christian world would have resisted him; yea God would have said *unto the wicked* man, *what hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth?* Is piety then a patent for persecution, and eminence of faith a ground of dominion? Far from us be a thought so absurd!

These are the sources, from which proceeds the claim of dominion over conscience, and we suppose this society to their honour have rejected them all, and are happy strangers to every kind of intolerance. We wish, however, to hear from your own mouths that you have been directed by liberal

principles, and we wait now to hear how you have proceeded.

[*Henry Keene Esq. one of the Deacons of the church, then gave an account of the steps taken in the choice of their pastor. The church attested their choice, Mr. Dore acknowledged his acceptance of the invitation, and delivered his confession of Faith; on which Mr. Robinson subjoined:*]

SIR,

I rejoice in the liberty which this church enjoys. Nobody has presented you a creed to subscribe. You have freely spoken your own sentiments, and you are not possessed with the rage of persecuting such as do not say after you. Remember your *Confession of Faith* is not the Gospel, but your opinion of the Gospel, and I dare say you will never mistake your *Creed* for the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. What I enjoy is, not that you have spoken my faith, but your own; for in doing so christian liberty consists. Whether we approve or disapprove of your sentiments we would object, were you to attempt to *impose* them upon us. . . . . .

. . . . . .

I mention these things freely to you, not because I disapprove of what you said, but only to exemplify the difficulty of *imposing* a creed; and moreover I know you are a man of liberal sentiments, who enter entirely into the views of such as love christian liberty, and who have discovered at once in your confession of faith, two dispositions that do you honour; the one, firmness in principles of your

own, the other justice (I will not say candour, for we ask no favour,) to the claims of other believers. Long may you live the peaceable and successful teacher of this upright and respectable congregation; and after this life may you all be admitted to the immediate presence of God, to enjoy him for ever and ever!

I cannot conclude without observing, how very much it is in the power of every christian to free himself from all shackles in religion, to enter on the immediate enjoyment of full liberty of conscience in our churches, provided he submit to take up that cross, which always did, and always will accompany such a frank,ingenuous conformity to the dictates of an unbiassed conscience, the convictions of a mind that estimates truth above all the advantages of the world. God give us all grace to do so! To him be honour and glory for ever! Amen!

SERMON IX.

A DISCOURSE

Preached at the Ordination of Mr. GEORGE BIRLEY, at *St. Ives, Huntingdonshire*, Oct. 18. 1786.

PROVERBS xxvii. 10.

Thine own friend, and thy father's friend forsake not.

FRIENDSHIP is the state, from which we derive the discipline of the primitive church: a discipline so essential to the safety of every christian congregation, that, if it be neglected, we scruple not to affirm, the discourse just now addressed to your minister*would open to you a dangerous gulf: for should your minister be all that the servant of God hath required him to be, and should you in confidence of that, neglect the practice of personal religion, and expect him to discharge the obligations of the whole society, you would sink first into immorality, then into ignorance, and lastly into perdition.

You have forseen this danger, and you have requested one of us, who from neighbouring churches have come hither to behold your faith and order, in the name of the rest to speak to you on this subject, and for this purpose I have chosen the text, for friendship is a state of hearts become one by

* The *Charge*, delivered by Mr. Dan Taylor, of London.

mutual esteem, and, to say all in one word, the spirit of it is the fulfilment of the whole law. One benefit of this view of the subject is brevity, for where love abounds few precepts are necessary. From this general principle, then, we will attend to one particular exercise of it in christian fellowship; and we will first explain the subject as it regarded the primitive church, and then accommodate it to the condition of this society.

Much hath been written on the discipline of the primitive church; but it is highly credible, it originated in some very plain fact, some very simple cause suited to the character of Jesus, and the condition of his disciples. If a cause adequate to all the effects be assigned, more would be redundant and ostentatious. Consider what I shall say on the subject, not as an investigation of it, nor as a reflection on others, nor as an oracle to you, but merely as a sketch of the first principles of a subject, which would fill many volumes; principles, not now to be disputed, but merely stated; principles, however, of real action, and tending to nothing but peace and virtue.

The discipline of the primitive churches was not taken from the œconomy of Moses. That œconomy was fastened to a place, confined within a given period of time, and exhibited sensible objects to the worshippers. The late learned prelate, Bishop Warburton, in his life of the emperor Julian, hath clearly proved that the total subversion of the Mosaical dispensation was essential to the very being of the christian œconomy. As a theory this is

granted by all. In practice the case differs. Some christians in early times lost sight of this sound original maxim, and, unhappily, incorporated the discipline of the *temple* into the religion of Jesus, and on this mistake the Roman church is built. Hence the return of christians back into the bondage of infancy regulated by meats, and days, and first elements of erudition. Hence a ritual, a pontiff, and a priesthood. Hence holy wars, and the defence of the faith by the sword of civil government. Hence a thousand institutes all alien from the spirit of him, who said, *Behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain.*

The primitive discipline was not taken from the *synagogue.* Synagogues were a sort of oratories resembling our meeting-houses, chapels or parish-churches, erected not for sacrifice, which was confined to the temple, but merely for purposes of devotion, and its appendage, instruction. It should seem, for reasons not now necessary to be mentioned, these houses were first erected at the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity, when the condition of the people made such places necessary. In Babylon they had lost the language in which their Scriptures were written, and it was necessary to remedy this inconvenience by glossing the text when it was read to the people, that they might not lose the sense in a confusion of terms. — Here on Sabbath days the people assembled to pray, and to give and receive instruction by reading the holy Scriptures and expounding the

sense. Order rendered rules necessary, and rules ripened into laws. In time these laws formed a system of parochial government: so I think I may venture to call the jurisprudence of the synagogue. Many learned men have supposed that primitive christians adopted this discipline, and regulated their social worship by it. Probably some did so; but it should seem they were Jews influenced by prejudices of education, and who, having only a slight knowledge of christianity, incorporated with it maxims of a polity not adapted to the views of their divine master; for it would be easy to prove that the discipline of the synagogue was penal, practicable only in an assembly of rulers and subjects, and of course not fitted to a society of equals, which was the condition of the primitive church, as will be observed presently.—Some have supposed, the Lord Jesus intended to recommend this discipline by his advice in case of trespass, recorded in the eighteenth of Matthew; but that learned foreign lawyer, Professor Boehmer, (let it not offend if we add the best modern writer on this subject,) hath elucidated the text, and proved beyond contradiction, that the religion of Jesus did not in its primitive institution admit of any civil coercion, and consequently that its discipline was not that of the synagogue, which did.

The primitive discipline was not formally instituted by *Jesus Christ*. In vain we search for it in any of his public discourses, or private conversations. The Jews differed in speculations, but their rites were uniform, because their legislator

had with precision adjusted every thing: but what chapter of the life of Jesus can any church produce, and say, here is our ritual; this is our order; these are the institutes of our discipline; this verse tells us how to admit a member; that how to elect an elder, a deacon, or a teacher; here we are told how to form a society; there how to preserve it; and in case of dissolution, this instructs us how to separate, or how to re-assemble. On these subjects the wise master of our assemblies said nothing.

Finally, the discipline of the christian church was not expressly appointed by the *apostles.* In the present view, the apostolical writings may be conveniently classed under four heads. Some are prophetical, as the revelation of John; some paragraphs in the writings of Paul, and some detached verses of others. A second class are historical, as the Acts of the Apostles, and in the epistles many incidental names, dates, places, persons and events. Prophecy affords no rules of discipline: history furnishes precedents: but precedents, however, which are law only to such as are in circumstances similar to those of the persons mentioned by the historians. The third class may be called expository of the christian doctrine, as the epistle to the Hebrews written for the Jews, and the epistles to the Romans, Ephesians, Galatians, and others, written for the Gentiles, or, to speak more properly, for societies composed of both Jews and Gentiles. Discipline here is an occasional subject, and it is chiefly applicable to the then state of

the societies. In a similar state christians may adopt these prudential maxims, the end of all which is *peace, peace.* The last class consists of moral precepts adapted to the conditions of individuals. Is Timothy an overseer? He must be blameless. Is Paul aged? His advice ought to be respected. Are you an husband? Be kind. Are you a master? Be just and humane. Are you a servant? Be content with providence, diligent in business, and reverence your master. Are you a member of the christian body of believers? Imitate Jesus your pattern, and love your brethren.—Nothing of all this can be called a christian ritual, and advice to a church, like advice to a wife, presupposes a state regulated by rules not mentioned by the adviser; and indeed the apostles no more drew up a discipline than they did a ritual for the hiring of servants, or the celebration of marriage.

What then! Did Jesus leave this important article unsettled? No. On the contrary, he finished it by an effort of wisdom truly divine. Here, christians, forgive me if I wish this were a long summer-day, not that we might have time to adduce proof, for a word tells all, but that we might enjoy the felicity of admiring the sublimity and simplicity of the mind of the Son of God. How pleasing to stand by, and see him create the new world of men and things; to see him dissolve the old ties of nature, and form the rock on which the sacred edifice is to be built!

The Christian discipline rose of itself out of that *condition of equality*, into which Jesus put his dis-

ciples. He took twelve men of even rank, and perhaps with little dissimilitude of age and ability, and constituted them a family of love, or, if you will, a circle of friends. They were his whole church. Here was no master, no servant; no priest, no people; no prince, no subject; no father, no son. It was not the union of a literal family like that of the temple; or of a district like that of the synagogue; or of a vague multitude like that which attended the preaching of Christ; or of an universal body under the direction of universal itinerants, immediately inspired as the churches were after his decease in the times of the apostles: but it was a state of the perfect equality of minds united by mutual benevolence.

What is discipline? Order. What was primitive discipline? Order without government, and above the want of it. In this exuberant soil of peace and freedom the human understanding unfolds itself in free inquiry, free from the frost of nipping penalties; the heart mellows into ripeness; fear of God and love of his creatures, reverence for the first great cause and attachment to his image, meekness, gentleness, goodness, and devotion, form a fragrant compound of delicious taste; or, to use the language of Solomon just before the text, it is the *sweetness* of friendship, which *like ointment and perfume rejoice the heart.* It is not the fabric, however ornamented, it is this moral excellence, that excites the exclamations of christians; and this in many a mean place hath impelled them to look upward and sing: *Lord, I love the habita-*

tion of thine house, the place where thine honor dwelleth!

Jesus left civil society untouched, and there rank and government are necessary: but it is a true fact that primitive christian societies were small independent bodies of equals. Many ecclesiastical historians have observed this, and have remarked that the first christians never elected officers because they had no right to teach or to baptize, but because they had not all either ability or opportunity to officiate. Even women taught and baptized, but order required them to officiate only to their own sex, and therefore the first churches appointed them deaconesses. In large churches they were numerous; they sat in public in a seat by themselves, and they were distinguished in the middle age by a small grave ornament on the neck. The form of ordaining these female officers may be seen in the menologies of the Greek church. In the primitive church, order required a society of friends to visit and relieve each other, and, expedition being necessary in many cases, it was found adviseable to elect a few to receive and distribute relief, to comfort the sick, to inspect the condition of prisoners, to try to procure their enlargement, and in brief to manage their secular affairs, as well as to wait on the rest at the administration of the Lord's Supper and Baptism. In our small societies deacons execute these friendly offices without neglect of their worldly employments; but in large primitive churches, as the office took up the whole time of a deacon, justice required an indemnity, not to say

a reward, and the church wholly supported their deacons.——Hence in time, in declining churches, when the teachers had risen into a priesthood they associated deacons into their order. In the middle of the third century, it should seem, by comparing a letter of Cyprian with another of Cornelius of Rome, and a passage in Optatus, there were in Rome at that time forty-four christian congregations in the Catholic connection; and in these churches there were on the list no less than fifteen hundred widows, sick, poor, and other objects of charity, wholly dependant on the liberality of the church. To the honor of the church they were all supported; and deacons who had so much employment were honorably maintained as justice required. Such equity ought to prevail in all our modern offices; and a church that requires the whole time of an officer, deacon or teacher, ought to support him; and an election to such an office not including an election to a maintenance is not just. How essential is friendship to the execution of these offices! An hireling may walk his round, and pace the circle in godly guise; but the unpurchaseable feelings of friendship never warmed the breast of an hireling.

Let this suffice at present for a rude sketch of the primitive discipline, and let us close by accommodating it to your present circumstances. In years past your society entered into the condition mentioned a little while ago. A few equals associated themselves together by mutual esteem. Money did nothing, power did nothing, attachment

of esteem was all in all.—Christian love is not blind, it hath an object, that object is moral excellence. The man who exhibits this creates the emotion of love in the heart of another.—This emotion clings to its object, and becomes a social bond. Reciprocal esteem is a two-fold, four-fold, ten-fold cord that cannot be easily broken. New emanations of good actions produce new affections, and as moral excellence forms the bond, so nothing but the loss of it can dissolve the tie. Hitherto you have continued, lately you have elected a stationary teacher, and to-day you have in due order declared him to us. Long may you live happy in the connection! This, however, will depend on a perpetual exercise of friendship; to which, in the name of all our churches, I venture to exhort you.

On supposition your minister should execute his office above censure, friendship to him will demand the sacrifice of the two mean passions of vanity and envy.—When we speak of ministers above censure, we do not mean that any man can so execute an office in this world as to place himself out of the reach of censure; but we affirm, some men execute the office of ministers so as to deserve none, and so as to be affected by none, because they perceive the injustice of it. Let enemies of revelation say what they will, thanks be to God, the christian ministry hath in all ages, and in all denominations that admit of the office, been adorned with men of superior talents. To them the evidences of christianity have appeared demonstra-

tive, the mission of Jesus divine, the Christian Church the purest society, the cultivation of intelligent minds the noblest employment, and the hope of immortality an irresistible motive. With talents for any office they have chosen this, and they have executed it with all that easy magnanimity, which superiority of genius never fails to produce. Equal to every duty of their office, they discharge it with gracefulness and ease, deaf to the din of infidels, above the trammels of a bigot, and happy strangers to the emotions of sordid ruffled minds. No caresses bewitch such men into self-admiration, no censures sink them into sullenness or wrath, they have little parts in the news, and none in the slanders of the times, and they know how to sit placed on the bank till the floods of the passions of weak brethren run by. Always on consecrated ground, because always in the presence of their God, they contemplate his perfections, and when they speak, devotion and virtue are cherished, and vice, abashed and confounded, retires. It was this dignity that supported the apostles: they taught what they knew to be true, and nothing could disconcert their plan: they attested the resurrection of Jesus from the dead with a clearness of evidence in their own bosoms, which rendered them far superior to suspicion and timidity, and all their idle concomitants. In case your minister executes his office in this manner, like the disciples of John, *rejoice in his light;* but neither on the one hand envy his attainments, nor on the

other display any vanity on account of your accidental connection with them. Why should you envy? Would you employ his abilities if you had them in the cause of virtue? This is what he does. Why should you be vain of such a minister? To-day he fills and graces your pulpit; to-morrow he will lie all cold and breathless in the grave. Know this for certain; envy inhabits none but little minds: great men are strangers to it. They wish for nothing: they *have all and abound.* Observe Moses: on a certain occasion, Joshua informed him of two prophets in the camp, and added, *My Lord forbid them. Enviest thou for my sake,* said the man of God: *would God, all the Lord's people were prophets!* Remark John the Baptist: some told him, Jesus baptized, and all men went to him. John exclaimed, *He must increase, but I must decrease.* What! must you retire, and must Jesus come forward? Must your name and your disciples be absorbed in his? And on what ground do you patiently submit to this, which most men resent; you do more, you rejoice in it. Yes, *he must increase, and I must decrease. I stand and hear his voice, and I rejoice greatly, my joy is full;* and the secret spring of all my feelings is friendship: I am the *friend* of the bridegroom!

In case your minister should execute his office with integrity mixed with great imperfection, friendship will demand the exercise of patience, prudence, and other such holy dispositions. There are some very upright ministers, who mix in the execution of their office great imperfections with few and

slender gifts. Some have bodily imperfections, natural or acquired. Others have mental imperfections, a dullness of fancy, a slowness of apprehension, a treacherous memory, an habit of jejune and inconsequential reasoning. Some have imperfections of morality, a waspish temper, a habit of levity, or discontent, a turn for slander, a taste for litigation, a something that tarnishes the beauty, and takes off from the strength and worth of the man. These imperfections go into the ministry along with us; and if to these be added imperfections of condition, such as rudeness, indocility, vanity of office and so on, they create a succession of trouble in the church. In such a case friendship dictates what to do. Not the passions but reason and religion must guide the conduct. What right have we, each imperfect in his sphere, perhaps each more imperfect than he imagines, what possible right have we to demand perfection? The man who requires it as a reason of esteem discovers his folly and injustice, equally inattentive to the condition of mankind, and his own imperfect state. In all such cases as have been supposed, let us consult the genuine emotions of a friendly heart. Observe the wise and mild father of a family: see how he rolls his eye along over all his little empire, an eye of penetration irradiated with pity and love: neither is he ignorant of the imperfections of his children, nor doth he nourish or applaud them, but he is not stung into madness, and his coolness is a preparation to improve them. The

prophet Isaiah observes this majesty of manner in the Messiah. *Who is blind as the Lord's servant; or deaf as my messenger: Seeing many things but observing them not?* Consider how the patient Saviour surveyed his family: how deliberate his advice: how soft and suasive his arguments; how gentle his hints and reproofs: how many improprieties common to humanity he overlooked: how he estimated integrity, his own work, in his disciples, though accompanied with innumerable weaknesses, the works of the world and sin! Let us humbly imitate this bright example. Only the trial decorates the honest heart that makes it.

Who can unfold the dark days of futurity! Your minister may execute his office with success, or he may spend his strength for nought: for either case friendship stands prepared. Doth he inform the ignorant, comfort the wretched, convert the wicked, prosper in all his labours? Happiest of human kind: he gives his God the glory! And what says friendship? A wise spectator observes his situation, views him as men view a man on a pinnacle, who however cautious may by accident fall. Such situations have hurt the virtue of many: they went up humble, they came down proud: they ascended modest, they descended mad. A spectator, as friendly as he is wise, will exert himself to preserve his friend from danger by frequently exhibiting to him the modesty of Jesus his example, and by rivetting on the tables of his heart the language of an apostle: *God causeth us to triumph in Christ. I planted, Apollos watered,*

but God gave the increase: I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I but the grace of God which was with me. Doth he labour for nought? Doth he distress himself on this account? Friendship will heal his heart, by reminding him, that the cause is not his but God's: that no mortal is accountable for efforts beyond his power: that none can stem a torrent of untoward circumstances: that infinite wisdom doth not acquaint us with all its matters: that the good master in heaven will appraise his servants by their fidelity, and not by their success: that undoubted characters have made the same complaints: that zeal complains without a cause: that in the great struggle between truth and error, virtue and vice, the gospel of Jesus and the maxims of the world, it is natural to expect some defeats: that the defeat of an individual tells for nothing in the general history: in brief, that a prophet settled the matter when he said, *though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord.* Hence an apostle says, *Glory, honour, and peace, to* .... prophets? yes, and to *every* other *man that worketh good.*

Suppose the worst .... I know your minister so well, that he would think an apology ill-timed for what I am going to say. Suppose the worst, his fall into an habit of some enormous vice, which should render it necessary for you to degrade him from his office, and to separate him from your community. Even this sad case demands the aid of friendship, and friendship attends as at a funeral

wih aching heart, and eyes streaming with compassion. *Very pleasant hast thou been to me: I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan!* Friendship doth not cry havock, raise the croud, and call the country in. In silent sadness genuine sorrow moves; or, if it speaks, it utters sighs and prayers to him, who sees and pities every human woe.

About the middle of the third century, when the populous churches of Rome and Carthage had become extremely corrupt, the people called from their leaders Donatists and Novatians, dissented, and formed separate congregations. The Novatians called themselves Cathari or puritans, not out of ostentation, but to hold up in one word the cause of their separation, and the end proposed by their union. They dissented because the churches were become immoral, and they associated on the original plan in order to secure purity of manners. The discipline of these puritans was severe, they admitted any virtuous believer into communion; but, said they, mark this; our discipline is a mutual contract for virtue; if you continue virtuous you will be happy with us through life, for we are brethren; but if you violate the compact, and become wicked, we shall separate you from our society, and do what you will you can never be re-admitted till the day you die. Far be it from us to judge of your future state; that we leave to the great Being: may you repent, and may your repentance be accepted! but to fellowship with us you can never be re-admitted. It is easy to imagine, this was a powerful preservation from sin. There, as it were, hung

the drawn two edged sword, an argument against vice glittering in the eyes of every beholder. In defence of this discipline it was said, the puritan churches used no force to put any person under it, each member chose to be in the condition : they had no support from civil government, and they exercised no civil coercion ; the separation of a delinquent was only from church ordinances, and it effected no civil inconvenience. This discipline then was the whole support of the cause, and had this been relaxed, the cause would have crumbled away, and would have been lost in the world, that treacherous whirlpool which hath swallowed up so many societies of lax moralists. The discipline of our churches is not so severe. It admits of re-admission, and consequently it opens a wide field for friendship; for will not the friend endeavour to restore his brother? Will he ever desert him while hope of recovery remains? No, never will he relinquish his claim till he be utterly incorrigible, or actually dead.

Innocence is better than repentance. Let us see danger at a distance, and guard the pass. It is not possible for a good man to go instantly into the practice of great crimes ; but what slow degrees may effect, who can tell? Permit me to abbreviate the short account of one sad case. In the very early part of my ministry, while I was yet a boy, I had been preaching at a town far distant from this place, where I was on a friendly visit. Most youths in office are caressed, more for the novelty than for their abilities. One morning a

very decent grey headed man inquired for me, and, when he was admitted, without ceremony he threw himself on a chair and sobbed and wept, but could not speak. I retired to give him an opportunity to vent his passion, for such swells of grief, whatever be the cause, threaten to burst the heart and destroy the frame. On returning, the man had recovered his calmness, and, omitting his apologies, the substance of what he said was this:— "Compassion for your youth compels me to tell you my case. At your age I was as innocent and as happy as you. Like you, too, I was chosen by one of our churches to teach. I taught, the church caressed me, neighbouring churches gave me unequivocal marks of their esteem, each new day was winged with new delights, my time passed sweetly, every month was May. One day an old man said to me, young man guard against vanity. I felt myself hurt, for I saw no need of the caution, and I did not conceal my dislike. Does that offend you? added the old man; take care you do not become a profligate; for, know this, a man unapprized of danger is at the brink of a fall; and as confidence is the parent of carelessness, so carelessness is the high road to the commission of actual sin; one sin leads to another, and by slow degrees a plausible youth may become a profligate man. I paid very little regard to my admonisher, and a few years after, somehow or other, I first tasted, then submitted to entreaties, then repeated, and at length found myself a lover of strong liquors; connected with dissipated men like myself,

fond of my condition, deaf to the remonstrances of my friends; and in brief the church was obliged to cut me off, and I became a confirmed drunkard; I was never happy. My appetites on fire impelled me to intoxication; but the stings of my conscience could never be blunted; and between the two I was in a state of torment. How insensibly do habits of vice form themselves! How difficult is it to subdue them when they are become obstinate! I am not come to you for advice: I know all about it; I am not come to make you the depositary of my holy resolutions: I should try to keep them, if you were not in the world: I come in pure affection to say to you; watch over yourself: be afraid of the first emotions of sin; and reverence the cautions of aged men, always older, and generally wiser than ministers when they are first elected to office." Let such advice come from what quarter it will, it demands attention and gratitude.

Finally. Let friendship guide you, when *your friend, your father's friend,* the minister of your choice declines and dies. Such is the fate of man, and in all the glow of youth, and the glory of life, he should recollect the decree of Almighty God, *Unto the dust thou shalt return.* When men grow old in office, or, to adopt the style of an apostle, when they *use office well, they purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith, which is in Christ Jesus.* They acquire honour and pleasure, the testimony of their consciences, and the benedictions of the church; and these sweeten the last days of life. Then the good

man enjoys the well earned fruit of his labour, and departs from a station of peace below, to the temple of felicity in heaven. When that day comes, respect the remains of the man you love: console his widow: inspect and guide his children: and *all things, whatsoever ye would that he should do to you, do ye even so to him: for this is the law and the prophets.*

To conclude. We ask no favours for your minister: he needs none. We affix no honours to vague, unmeaning names. We ground the obligations of a people to their minister on the benefits which they derive from the execution of the office. If he be the real, as he is the official, friend of the whole society, he need not hunt after praise, or stoop to pick it up; it will follow him, and affix itself to his name, and his name alone will stand for a compound of excellencies, the bare sound of it exciting ideas that refresh the soul. *Do any inquire of Titus? He is my partner, my fellow-helper; such as he are messengers of the Churches, and the glory of Christ.*

Of what we have said, then, this is the sum. When the whole world was lying in wickedness, the love of God sent Jesus Christ to redeem us. His redemption extended over the life that is, as well as over that which is to come, and he freed his church both from future punishment and present disorder. He left secular affairs to be refined by the mere operations of reason and experiment; but he regulated his church, not by an ordinal in form, but by an effusion of the Holy Spirit, which

enlightened and converted a few men, and placed them in a condition, equal,and perfectly free. Out of this condition of equality, in all periods and at all places, the simple discipline of the christian church naturally and necessarily rises, exactly as good works rise out of faith. Offices in such societies do not destroy equality; and the discipline is more properly order than government. Order requires the wisest to teach the rest; and superiority of wisdom and virtue are the only, or the only essential, qualifications of officers. In every society, when men of superior talents employ them for the benefit of the rest, justice demands a retribution; and a wise esteem of real worth is that attachment which we call friendship; an attachment not to be withdrawn even when many imperfections lower the worth of the man. This friendship is a domestic tutor, always at hand, and always prepared to suggest what to do. Where this love is, *it suffereth long, and is kind, it envieth not, it vaunteth not itself, it doth not behave itself unseemly, it seeketh not its own, it is not easily provoked, it thinketh no evil, it is,* in one word, *the fulfilling of the law.* Into the soft arms of this benign disposition, extended to receive him, we commit your minister to-day, sincerely praying, that *the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, may keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.*

SERMON X.

SLAVERY INCONSISTENT WITH THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTIANITY.

Preached at *Cambridge*, Feb. 10, 1788.

LUXE iv. 18.

The Lord hath sent me—to preach deliverance to the captives.

JEHOVAH hath sent me to proclaim liberty to captives. It is not necessary to be a captive to discover the worth of such a declaration as this: it is sufficient to be a spectator of captivity.

The Jews suffered by the fate of war several captivities; and in that which is called the Babylonian, a foreign victor reduced between twenty and thirty thousand free citizens to a condition of slavery. The king, only in the nineteenth year of his age, when faults deserve pity more than blame, was stripped of all the ensigns of his dignity, and put in chains. His mother in the decline of life, and his wives in the bloom of it, all unadorned, distinguished only by depression of spirits, and dejection of countenance, shared his cruel reverse of fortune. His officers civil and military, his craftsmen and artificers followed in train, and all at the will of the conqueror went into the hopeless condition of slaves, some to prison, some to unpro-

ductive servitude, and some to death. No humane spectator of such a complicated calamity, can help feeling a just indignation at the tyrant; mixing with compassion for the slaves: for what had the king of Babylon to do with the sins of the Jews?

A proclamation of liberty to captives, then, meets the wishes of both sufferers and spectators, and grates only on the ears of a tyrant who makes slaves, and masters who hold them in servitude. Such is the declaration of the text, and only one circumstance obscures the glory of it. When a Cyrus publishes his resolution to liberate captives, the world instantly gives him credit for sincerity, and applause for his generosity; but the text is the language of Jesus, a poor man. This, however, in the present case, is no objection; because if a poor man can discover a method by which the just maxims of a monarch, which are only local and temporary, may be rendered universal and perpetual, his birth and station are of no consequence, his wisdom is all in all, and his language is reputed, as it ought to be, the voice of nature, the reason of all mankind. The fact is, Jesus was a man, and the friend of man; and the proposal in the text was not the inefficient wish of an ordinary citizen, but the sober plan of one, who knew how to carry his design into effect. He did not, indeed, enlist armies, appoint generals, or even acquaint monarchs with his intention: he did not immediately remonstrate against the injustice of slave-holders, nor did he rouse the passions of their slaves: but he infor-

med a few disinterested lovers of mankind of a few facts, which he foresaw would make their way, and slowly but certainly subvert the whole system of slavery; facts which, whenever the slave-holder should come to know them, would compel him by his own convictions to release his slaves; and facts, which as soon as the slave should comprehend, would prepare him to bear an advance from the servile condition of a beast, into the dignity of a man.

Let us select from the gospel of Jesus three doctrines; and let us address the first to a slave apart; the second to a slave-holder apart; and, the third to both masters and slaves: and, although it be in this stage of the business mere theory, yet let us examine what practice, if there be no unforeseen obstacles, the theory must naturally produce.

The Lord Jesus taught the dignity of *man* as an intelligent and immortal being: a true fact, but till then wholly unknown to slaves, and very imperfectly, if at all, to their masters. He addressed men as capable of knowing and enjoying intellectual pleasures, and he reported facts naturally adapted to excite and exercise the latent powers of the mind. He shewed that man must live in a future state to reap the reward of his virtues, or to suffer the punishment of his crimes. He spoke of him as a creature of worth, and according to his estimate a single soul is of more value than a whole world of unintelligent matter. It is natural to suppose that a slave informed of

the dignity of his nature must rise in value in his own account, become in his own eyes a man of natural consequence equal with his lord, and feel himself inspired with that noble pride of nature which distinguishes and dignifies the free. From under the depression of slavery, having heretofore known no more of himself than of his master's camel, that he had sensual appetites, the slave should seem to struggle into new existence, aspire to the distinctions of a man, the pleasures of an intelligent being, the joy of knowing God, the practice of virtue, and the prospect of immortality. In absolute servitude a man hath every thing to fear and nothing to hope, and his spirits sink, till, having no prospect, and no use for hope, his sensual appetites at the same time continuing to employ him, he forgets his dignity, and ceases to reason like a man: but by admitting the fact taught by Jesus Christ, the soul of this sunken slave takes a contrary direction, rises ennobled into its proper state, and enters first on the felicity of speculating moral excellence, then proceeds to the pleasure of doing good, and next advances to the delight of prospect, where no bounds are set to the eye, and where bliss extends beyond all he can ask, or think.

Jesus taught the true character of *God:* that there was a God; that there was but one; that he was a father, and the universe his family; that his care extended over all his works, the most inconsiderable creatures not excepted; that he compassionated the most wretched, and was ready to

forgive the most wicked; that a return to duty was a return to mercy; and that eternal glory was the reward of as many as copied his wise and just administration, for he was a *Father in heaven, who made his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sent his rain on the just and on the unjust:* that in a future state he would call all men to account, and admit of no distinctions except those of just and unjust; that justice he would eternally protect, and injustice for ever punish. The system of a slave-holder is a contrast to all this: his government is not founded in justice; his maxims of obtaining and employing, rewarding and punishing his fellow creatures, far from tending to equalize, introduce, and support the most horrible of all distinctions, and of three equal men make one an absolute slave, a second an inhuman task master, and the third a lawless tyrant above controul. Bring this stately slave-holder acquainted with the Supreme Being, more matser of him than he of his slave; enlighten his mind with the knowledge of God, and it should seem the moment he approves of the divine perfections he must abhor his own depravity, blush at his dissimilitude to the original beauty, and cast about in his mind how to restore his slaves to their just and natural rights.

Jesus taught the nature and the indispensible necessity of *holiness.* In his gospel, holiness is in general conformity to God, to *God* and not to rites and ceremonies; *be ye the children,* the resemblances *of your Father:* and in particular it is the possession of such dispositions as constitute order,

and are neccessarily productive of happiness. *Happy are the* rich, the powerful; No; Happy are *the pure in heart;* happy are the humble, happy are the mild, happy are the merciful, for those shall *see God,* and these shall *obtain mercy.* The doctrine of Jesus is; that such a similarity to God is absolutely necessary to the hope of pleasing and enjoying him: that it is impossible to substitute any thing in its stead; that without this conformity all pretensions to the character of christian are delusive and vain, frauds which may be a-while concealed, but which impartial justice must in the end expose to the eternal glory of the rectitude of God, and to the everlasting disgrace of wicked men. Such doctrine, addressed to a company of slaves and slaveholders it should seem, must convince the master that the connection between shewing mercy, and obtaining mercy is just and natural; that if he shewed no mercy he ought not to hope for any; and the slave that to be good is the noblest end of being free.

Theory says; tidings such as these, committed by Jesus to his disciples to be published to *every creature* in all *nations,* ought, assuredly, to produce effects when they reach the ears of slaves. They actually did so, and slaves became members of the first christian churches.

Let us follow this doctrine into a land of slavery in order to discover the operation of it in the minds and manners of the inhabitants. In Attica alone, it is said, there were only twenty or thirty thousand freemen, and they held in servitude four hun-

dred thousand slaves. Every christian teacher went to proclaim liberty to these captives; but this in such a country was a most difficult and delicate enterprize. It originated in justice, and was replete with mercy; but where human depravity hath arrived at a certain pitch, to introduce justice and mercy is the most hard and hopeless of all undertakings. Slaves are the wealth of their masters, and to emancipate them is to transfer their property. Slaves keep up the rank of their masters; and to elevate the one is to degrade the other class. The execution, therefore, of the Saviour's plan, required the prudent application of wise and well judged measures so as not to injure private property, not to disturb civil order, not to expose christianity to the scandal of sedition, not to obscure the glory of a kingdom *not* of this world, and yet so as to procure effectual deliverance to captives, ample indemnity to their masters, and superior advantages to states. If a given number of slaves be an equal number of enemies, the state gains by the emancipation of them; and if the conscious rectitude of the action be an ample indemnity to him who makes restitution of unjust gain, the master is indemnified when he makes the slave free.

It is granted, the case was difficult, but it is affirmed, the apostles were equal to the task, and the primitive christians under their prudent direction conducted the business so as to adorn the doctrine of their Saviour, and to demonstrate the excellence of the christian religion. Three posi-

tions seem to contain the system of the primitive churches in regard to slaves.

First. The primitive christian slaveholders did not *force* their slaves to profess the christian religion. That some primitive christians were slaveholders is clear from this passage: Let as many servants as are under the yoke (these were slaves) count their own masters worthy of all honour: and they that have *believing* masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren, but rather do them service because they are *faithful* and beloved, partakers of the benefit. Philemon of Colosse was a master of this kind. He had a slave named Onesimus. This man defrauded his master, quitted his service, and fled to Rome. There by some means he became acquainted with Paul, who instructed him, and either baptized him, or caused him to be baptized into the profession of a christian. Then he returned him to his master with a letter, of which these words are a part; I beseech thee for *my son* Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds. The power of Philemon over his slave had always been absolute, but it was Paul, not Philemon, who initiated Onesimus; for conversion was then considered an effect of argument, and not of dominion. On this account the apostle called Onesimus his *son*, for by baptism he had brought him into the christian world.

Even pagan masters did not force their slaves to profess paganism: on the contrary, they thought their presence polluted the worship. It was for

very different reasons that pagans and christians did not force slaves to profess religion; and when the apostles exhorted christian slaves to count their pagan masters *worthy of all honour*, perhaps this might be one reason; they left their slaves to their own reflections in matters of religion, and they might be proselytes of Moses, or disciples of Christ without incurring the displeasure of their owners. Primitive christians entertained just notions of religion, and they wisely avoided to adorn it with the vain glory of popularity by forcing slaves to profess what they did not understand. To say the truth, the forcing of conscience was alike unknown in those times to pagans and christians, and it was an invention of later ages: whether an honourable one I shall not now inquire, but leave to the consideration of such as admire it.

Secondly. A profession of christianity was not a *title* to freedom in the first churches. A slave might hear, examine and believe the christian doctrine; he might be baptized, receive the Lord's supper, and enjoy the benefit of all christian institutes; but he might not claim manumission on *this* ground. An apostle speaks decidedly on the subject. Let every man *abide* in the same calling wherein he was called. Art thou called being a servant? Care not for it. Brethren, let every man wherein he is called, therein *abide with God.* This explains the language of the same apostle to Philemon concerning Onesimus. Perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him *for ever;* an expression taken from the

Jewish law of servitude. If the servant say, I will not go out free, then his master shall bore his ear, and he shall serve him *for ever*, that is for life. The primitive christians then did not affix manumission to profession of christianity, and they acted wisely, for it would have degraded religion from its dignity, temporal reward being only a more pleasing kind of force. In these pure churches there were neither punishments nor bribes.

Yet, thirdly, christianity is, as an apostle calls it, *a perfect law of liberty*, and its natural and genuine produce is universal justice, or, which is the same thing, universal freedom. In proof of this let us step into those primitive assemblies, and hear what the apostles said to their converts.

Paul exhorted slaves to become free, if they could. Art thou called being a servant? Care not for it; but *if thou mayest be made free use it rather*. A hint was all that prudence could allow on a subject so delicate, and it was equal to saying, set a just value upon freedom, and obtain it as soon as by any lawful means you can.

To such slaves as were under rigorous masters, and had no prospect of manumission, Peter gave this advice: Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thank-worthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering *wrongfully*. For what glory is it, if when ye be buffeted for your faults ye shall take it patiently? but if when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.

These were slaves subject to buffetting, or corporal punishment; but this is not an approbation of slavery, for the apostle complains of *wrong*, and his advice to the slave to be patient is applicable to this only as to one of many cases of affliction and oppression. Hence we reason, that the apostles disapproved of slavery, and that their advice to christian slaves amounted to this: get free if you can; but if you cannot, reflect on the wisdom of providence, and bear the oppression of your tyrants with patience.

Let us imagine a primitive assembly of christian slaveholders and slaves, *not now*, in this instance, *as slaves, but above slaves, brethren beloved in the Lord*, all sitting at the same table, eating the same bread, drinking the same cup, in remembrance of their common benefactor, who had said, *the Lord sent me to preach deliverance to captives.* Let us hear Paul commending charity, or universal benevolence. He describes it literally, and prizes it above the faith of miracles, above the gift of tongues, above the distribution of alms, above the glory of martyrdom. Earnestly covet the best gifts; and yet I shew unto you a more excellent way. The greatest of all gifts is charity. He describes it figuratively; the same subject in colours. All the members of Christ are one body. By one spirit we were all *baptized* into one body, whether we be *bond* or free. God hath set the members every one of them in the body as it hath pleased him, but the head cannot say to the feet, I have no need of you; for if one

member *suffer* all the members suffer with it, or if one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Could the bond, or could the free, hear, believe, and feel such discourses delivered by a Paul, and not regulate their actions by them? How must a slave-holder feel, when in the assembly a charitable deacon proclaimed; *remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them?* The doctrines and the ceremonies of christianity attack injustice and cruelty in their strong holds, depraved passions; and consequently if a slave trade be the effect of such passions our religion goes to subvert the whole system of slavery. Feel its influence, and the work is done.

Let us go a step further. After the decease of the apostles, christians understood that the liberating of slaves was a part of christianity, not indeed expressed in the direct words of a statute, but naturally and necessarily contained in the doctrines and precepts of it: in the precepts which equalized all, and in the first principle of all doctrines, the equal love of God to all mankind. In the centuries before the establishment of a profession of christianity, the christians who denominated themselves catholics, and who afterwards coalesced with the state, were the least enlightened, and the most depraved of all the disciples of Jesus, and the Africans were the lowest order of these catholics: yet even the Africans thought it a christian duty to liberate slaves. There is a letter of Cyprian of Carthage yet extant on this subject. Some Numidian bishops wrote him an ac-

count of the captivity of some christians. The letter fetched tears from his eyes. He represented the case to the church, and he collected a considerable sum of money for the redemption of the slaves. Along with the sum he sent the letter just mentioned, containing several christian reasons for redeeming captives, of which this is one: if Jesus at the last day will reward some, saying, I was *sick* and ye *visited* me, surely he will more abundantly reward others, to whom he may justly say, *I was a captive, and you set me free.*

Perhaps I may be allowed to hazard a conjecture, for this is not the place for critical investigation. It seems to me, that the Africans, who first invented infant-baptism, intended by it only to save children from sacrifice or slavery. Before the time of Cyprian, that is, before the middle of the third century, if there were any debate concerning the baptism of infants, it was the baptism of infants in *law*, minors, not natural infants. Primitive christians made conscience of closely copying the life of Christ. He was baptized when he began to be about *thirty* years of age, and it was a question of great consequence to the credit of christianity, whether a youth ought to be suffered to enter by baptism into a christian church, and to lay himself under obligations for life, before he arrived at years of legal discretion, or was allowed by law to dispose of himself; but in Africa, in the time of Cyprian, the baptism of an infant meant the baptism of a new-born babe. Every body knows that the Carthaginians were a colony from

Tyre: that the Moloch of Tyre was the Saturn of Carthage: that the barbarous worshippers of this demon sacrificed children to him in flames of fire: that they purchased infants as the Jews did turtle doves for sacrifice: that to supply the markets with sacrifices and slaves parents sold their children, thieves stole them, and fighting parties subdued and carried off whole families; and that it was not in the power of the Roman emperors themselves for several centuries, if at all, to put an end to this horrible practice of sacrificing human beings.

Among such monsters one Fidus taught what little he knew of christianity; and it is highly probable, for reasons not admissible here, that he hit on the method of saving the lives and liberties of the lambs of his flock, by prevailing on their parents to let him dedicate them to the one living and true God by baptism, as the Jews had dedicated theirs by circumcision, and by putting them under the protection of some reputable sponsors. The Africans did not then believe original sin, and Cyprian and his colleagues in council approved of the baptism of infants by Fidus, because they thought the son of man came not to destroy mens' *lives* but to save them. The Africans then, and long after, called baptism *salus*, and they baptized children *pro salute*, to which words no Pagan Roman, or Roman provincial had ever affixed the *christian* idea of salvation. If this were the case; if Fidus, pitying the smiling tawny or jetty babes at their mother's breasts, baptized them for *the safety* of their lives and liberties, lest their ill-

informed parents, long accustomed to do evil, should sell them, Fidus ought to be honoured as a benefactor to mankind, and the blame of diverting a christian institute from its original design goes over from him to others, who in other countries imitated his conduct without any imaginable worthy motive for doing so. The earliest council in Spain discovered a somewhat similar humanity to slaves by enjoining a penance of seven years for killing a slave by design, and five for causing the death of one by accident. The most depraved christians, therefore, in the primitive ages, were not so depraved as to imagine that barbarity and slavery, inseparable twins, could be consistent with the spirit of christianity.

To proceed. In later times, in those which are called the middle ages, it is clear, the emancipation of slaves was considered as the natural effect of christian principles. This is a voluminous subject full of various information, all tending to prove to the honour of christianity that it contributed more than any thing else in the world to emancipate slaves, to improve society, and to refine the manners of mankind: but a hint must suffice here.

We have heard much of the decline of the Roman empire, and we have been told christianity was the principal cause of the disaster. We respect the Roman empire. It was a fabrick of magnificence, one of the noblest efforts of the human mind. The Romans would be masters, but they were the best absolute masters in the world: however, let not splendour strike reason blind; the ge-

nius of Rome was love of dominion, the means often of obtaining it were factions in the senate, standing armies in the field, the depopulation of one province, the captivity of another, the reduction of millions to an unconditional dependence on the will of one. True it is, barbarous nations, as they are called, rushed into the empire, broke up the mighty mass of ancient despotism, and crumbled one into many independent states: but who will pretend to deny that, on the whole, order proceeded out of this confusion, and the western world in general became more, and more, rationally free. This was the declaration of several at the time, and it is very credible for many reasons both of theory and experiment. The revolution was a loss to Rome, but a gain to the world, a diminution of imperial dignity, but an increase of human liberty. However it were, this is certain; the new states allowed a liberty of conscience to freemen, which too many christian emperors had denied, and one of their first kings, for christian reasons, paid large sums for the redemption of captives. The Vandals in Africa, the Wisigoths, or Western Goths, in Spain, the Ostrogoths in Italy, the Franks in Gaul, and other nations of the same stock had just notions of civil and religious liberty, and kept men in bondage only till it became safe to set them free, always holding it consistent with the spirit of christianity to emancipate slaves. Even after their coalition with papal Rome, monarchs graced the birth of a prince with a manumission of slaves. Monks purchased children to

educate, and by associating them in their order made them free. The church freed many by ordaining them to office. Founders transferred their slaves with their lands to ecclesiastical bodies, which improved their condition, although it did not absolutely set them free. Dying persons ordered by will the emancipation of their slaves; and all charters and deeds of manumission, though mixed with superstitious notions, assigned christian reasons, and every body understood that the liberating of a slave was a good work, in the true spirit of christianity, and highly acceptable to Almighty God.

Let us come home to our own country. Our first known ancestors, the Britons, were wild and free, but dupes to the barbarous usages of druidical superstition. They fought, they made captives, they burnt them in baskets to the honour of their gods. The Romans, the Saxons, the Danes, and the Normans by various revolutions reduced many to slavery, and none of them attempted to distribute universal freedom. Slavery in a state is a deep-rooted obstinate evil, and love of dominion is a disposition that thrives too well in the hearts of depraved men. Conquerors will be masters, captives must be slaves. So lately as the first year of Edward VI. a statute degraded vagabonds into slaves. The act says, "if *any* person shall bring to *two* justices of peace any runagate servant, or any *other* which liveth idly and loiteringly by the space of *three* days, the said justices shall cause the said idle and loitering servant or vagabond to be marked with an hot iron on the breast with the

mark V. and adjudge him to be *slave* to the same person that brought or presented him, to have to him, his executors or assigns, for *two* years after, who shall take the said slave, and give him bread, water, or small drink, and refuse meat, and cause him to work by beating, chaining, or *otherwise*, in such work and labour as he shall put him unto, *be it never so vile:* and if such slave absent himself from his said master, within the said term of two years, by the space of *fourteen* days, then he shall be adjudged by two justices of peace to be marked on the forehead, or the ball of the cheek, with an hot iron, with the sign of an S. and further shall be adjudged to be slave to his said master *for ever:* and if the said slave shall run away the second time, he shall be adjudged a *felon*. It shall be lawful to every person to whom any shall be adjudged a slave, to put a ring of *iron* about his neck, arm or leg." This act was repealed two years afterwards, but there was slavery in England before and after this period. In our publick records, there is a charter of Henry VIII. enfranchising two slaves belonging to one of his manors; and there is a commission from Queen Elizabeth with respect to the manumission of certain bondmen belonging to her. There is in France a general law for the manumission of slaves, and though there is no such law in our statute book, yet the genius of our constitution was ever abhorrent of slavery; and now pure and proper slavery is so effectually done away that a slave or negro, the instant he lands in England, becomes a freeman, and the law will protect

him in the enjoyment of his person and property. Baptism is not necessary: to breathe British air is sufficient. Perhaps the vulgar errour of liberating a slave by baptizing him came from Africa along with other African doctrines into the western world.

Happy should I be, if I could add, there is no slavery in our plantations; but, although it is unpleasant to blame one's nation, yet we must say, and we say it with sincere sorrow, while we boast of freedom at home, and zealously oppose every attempt to diminish it, we annually reduce a people, who never injured us, to a servitude unmerited, unjust, and to an enormous degree barbarous as well as disgraceful to our country. We give the world lessons of cruelty, and, as we are called christians, innocent christianity, guiltless of oppression and blood, bears the scandal. The sins of individuals are not punished here, for this to them is only a state of trial; but collective bodies subsist here in a state of rewards and punishments, and if there be such a thing as national sin, that is it, assuredly, which the legislature makes its own. I fear, I fear, the African slave trade is of this kind.

Many plausible arguments have been used to defend this traffic, but, to say the truth, they are all reducible to one, that is the *gain* of it. What then becomes of justice, justice the base of the throne of God, if ideas of gain and loss be allowed to supply the place of notions of right and wrong? Gain is the reason of every wretch alive for every crime that he can commit. Why does the avari-

cious render himself deaf to the cries of all the afflicted? He saves by it. Why does he rob the fatherless, and oppress the widow? He gains by doing so. Whence the false weight, and the deceitful balance, the perpetual frauds of some, and the violent dealings of others? They are productive of money. The base assassin, why doth he plunge his execrable dagger into the heart of his benefactor? He hopes to profit by it. Let us never quit the ground of eternal, immutable justice, never imagine any thing right that allows the propriety of something unjust and wrong.

I recollect an incident in the life of David. In the hearing of three of his military officers, he one day wished for a little water of a certain spring; ThePhilistine troops were then in garrison defending the fortification where the spring was. The officers of David broke through the host of the Philistines, probably by killing some of the soldiers, and certainly at the hazard of their own valuable lives, took water of the spring, and returned with it to David. What did he? he took the water, but recollecting what they had hazarded to procure it, and very likely observing they had stained themselves with human blood, the water had lost its chrystal in his eye, it seemed blood in the cup, he could not drink it, he poured it out with horror, exclaiming as he looked up to the Parent of life, *My God forbid it me, that I should do this thing: shall I drink the blood of these men, that have put their lives in jeopardy!*

I apply this to the present case. If more than four hundred thousand men be held in perpetual slavery in the plantations; if near one hundred thousand innocent persons be annually reduced to servitude to supply the waste; if corporal punishment, little less than flaying alive, be necessary to their degradation: if raw salting be necessary to their preservation; if disgustful diet, if iron collars and brands in the flesh, if hanging, beheading, strangling, burning alive, setting heads and limbs on poles along the highway, if only a thousandth part of the horrors attributed to this trade be necessary to it, who doth not see that commodities coming through such hands are soaked in tears and stained with blood? Who doth not say with an apostle, *who is offended and I burn not?* or with David, *My God forbid that I should drink blood!*

Let us leave our negro brethren to the care of their heavenly Father, who will, without all doubt some day make inquisition for their blood: let us speak of ourselves. The slave merchant protests he abhors injustice, and cruelty hath no place in his soul. Be it so. He is a Briton, we give him credit. A fact it is, intended or unintended, cruelty comes to pass of course in this traffic, and it is impossible to conduct a slave trade without it. As far as some of you, my hearers, born free, and refined to perfection by rank, education, and commerce with the world, as far as you are superior to negroes, so much better are you prepared to meet and sustain with prudence an unavoidable ill.

Suppose a foreign banditti of sable ruffians in the night should attack your house, handcuff your servants, plunder your property, seize your person, strip your wife and children, and attempt to put you all in chains. Would you make no resistance? But if you resist, behold a plea for violence, wounds and death. If you should fall a victim to superior force, and find yourself and family on board a ship, beneath the hatches, deprived of liberty and light, food, friend and hope, are you sure you should have firmness enough to resist the temptation of laying violent hands on your children, your wife, and yourself? If you could surmount this, and if you should hereafter meet with a favourable opportunity to destroy your oppressor, could you help cleaving the barbarian asunder, although your doing so would make you appear a savage to yourself? Would you avoid this, and try to regain your liberty by exciting mutiny in hope of bringing the hard heart of the tyrant to relent; could you prevent the effect of this desperate rage, if he should set fire to the powder on board, and involve his world and all its inhabitants in one common destruction? Even a beast resists, when you would tame him to your hand, and will man resign his mastery over himself without a struggle? But if he struggle, a conflict commences which never ends without transgressing the bounds of humanity and justice.

Sorry, very sorry, I am to be obliged to say, human nature hath been affronted with the most

brutal indignities in the persons of negro slaves. They have been won and lost by their wanton masters at games of chance. When they have escaped, rewards have been offered for their heads, though he, who offers a price for blood, is guilty of felony. " I will give," says an advertising planter, " a reward of twenty pounds currency to whoever will apprehend the said negro. I will give the same reward for his *head*."* I blush to tell, that even in London, so lately as the year seventy two, an advertisement appeared in the Gazetteer of the first of June, for apprehending " An East India black boy about fourteen years of age, named" (I blush to relate this) " Pompey, having round his neck a brass collar, with a direction to a certain house."† Such well attested facts (and they are nothing compared with what remain to be told) preclude the necessity of reflections in form; and I finish by addressing a few words to an assembly that hath not lost the use of its reason.

Let us put our entire love of liberty out of all doubt to ourselves by immediately entering into that freedom, which reason and revelation unite to recommend. Let our understandings put off prejudice, and lay themselves open to rational conviction. Let our passions discard those of-

* *Law of Retribution.* By GRANVILLE SHARP Esq. London, 1776, page 238. Carolina Gazette by Robert Wells, Dec. 30, 1774.

† Mr. SHARP, in his *Limitation of Slavery*, London, 1776, page 35, says,—This " remarkable instance of tyranny came within my *own* knowledge.—I inquired after the author, and found that he was a merchant—who shall be nameless." The advertisement says, the boy " was named [Bob or] Pompey."

ficious pretended friends, which if admitted will be masters; pride, avarice, envy, revenge, love of ease, and passion for power. Let us assort our companions, and if we have no vices of our own, let us refuse to be enslaved by the vices of our acquaintance. Let our actions be just, open, manly, conformable to our own convictions, such as become free, intelligent and immortal men. Let us reduce our wants within the limits of our own efforts. Above all, let us copy the life of Jesus, for *if the Son make us free, we shall be free indeed.*

Have we children? Let us call them to our knee, and early inspire them with the love of virtuous freedom. Let us teach them the natural connection between civil and religious liberty, and the indispensible obligation of fostering both. Let us shew them where encroachments on natural rights begin, and whither they tend. Let us set before their eyes the sad but instructive histories of consciences oppressed, property plundered, families divided, and flourishing states ruined by exercises of arbitrary power. Let us thoroughly tincture them with the doctrine of Jesus, that *God sent his Son not to destroy mens' lives but to save them.*

Let us, if we have domestics, banish rigour, administer an œconomy of wisdom and goodness, and always remember *we have a master,* a master not a tyrant, *in heaven,* a guide to us, and a guardian to our servants.

Finally. In all civil and political debates let us be always on the side of liberty, not of licentiousness under the name, but of just, equal, and universal freedom. May we and our posterity enjoy it under the sanction of law! May other nations quickly recover or obtain it! May slaves receive it as soon as possible from their masters, lest the world should applaud them in future for taking it by force! May all the earth become in due time, as from what hath been done we hope and believe it will, a temple of God, and all the inhabitants his wise and unconstrained worshippers! May we pass, when we die, into that state where the slave is free from his master, where there is no sin, no sorrow, no pain, no death, where God is all in all, and where glory, honour, and immortality will be to all, who, after the example of their divine master have had both the power and the will *to comfort those that mourn, to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to captives, and to open the prison to them that are bound.*

APPENDIX.

THIS discourse, which attempts to shew that slavery is inconsistent with the genius of the christian religion, was composed less for the purpose of exposing the iniquity of the African slave trade than for that of vindicating the character of the primitive christians, or rather the credit of christianity itself, which is grossly misrepresented when it is described as compatible with slavery. Slavery in every form is unjust and inhuman; but a christian religion in coalition with slavery is a mere creature of fancy: in vain apologists quote the institutes of Moses, and the practice of new testament churches, for it is not credible that a slave trade is founded either on respect for Judaism, or faith in Christ, or that reasons for enslaving mankind are recommended by a book in praise of redemption. The most glorious part of the history of the Jews is that of their asserting their liberty against the tyranny of Pharoah; and the uniform spirit of the new testament is, *Ye are bought with a price, be not ye the servants of men.*

War is the parent of slavery, and captivity is as ancient as Nimrod. This hero built a city, and called it Babel, which is a contraction of *Babbath-al,* or *Bab-al-ain,* the apple of God's eye. *Bab,* all over the east, literally means the court of a

prince, and it was perfectly consistent with the genius of the Easterns to assimilate such a court to the *ain* or pupil of a beautiful eye. To this they affixed *al*, the name of God, which signified no more than that it was the most excellent of its kind. It was a divine pupil, *the beauty of the excellency of the Chaldees.* In this name the inhabitants and their kings boasted. The same Nimrod built other cities, and one at least with turrets on the walls, probably for the confinement of captives. This was named *Ballel*, which literally signifies a confusion, and figuratively a confusion of *sight*, owing to what is called a blood-shot, or a *blemish in the eye;* and this apt figure was intended to express what the early inhabitants of the east thought of restraint and captivity. From that day to this, successive Nimrods have held all the east in bondage, and their tyranny is a deformity that hath ever tarnished the beauty of Oriental nature, and marred the elegance of Asiatick art.

The Greeks boasted of liberty: but what was Spartan liberty more than aristocratical licentiousness? It becomes a Briton to think, that the celebrated Spartan government was a discipline founded on injustice, supported by cruelty, inimical to population and national wealth, incompatible with commerce, arts and sciences, utterly destructive of freedom and virtue, and productive of the very worst of all forms of despotism, an obstinate aristocracy. Spartan freemen were all idle gentlemen, who were forbidden to till the ground, or practise any mechanical employment, and who spent all

their time in hunting, dancing, festivals, amusements or war. They conquered a people called Helots, and converted them all into slaves. They made an equal partition of lands among themselves, and compelled the Helots to farm them for the owners. They called themselves *the state*, and they obliged the degraded Helots to perform the whole manual labour of the republic, and with unpardonable ingratitude and cruelty they assassinated them at their pleasure. They compelled them to intoxicate themselves, and play mad pranks, in order to teach their young masters by contrast sobriety and genteel behaviour, and this brutal practice is quoted without any marks of indignation by some moralists. The barbarous practice of putting weakly children to death prevailed among themselves. Their system of education was a string of absurdities, and the whole tended to sink the man in the soldier, and to annihilate domestic virtue under pretence of public good. In return for all the advantages, which the pretended state derived from the services of the Helots, the army guarded the miserable beings from foreign invaders, and protected them in the enjoyment of the blessings of absolute slavery!

In some parts of Greece slaves were, to masters, as ten to one, and in others as twenty to one. By an account taken at Athens at one time, it appeared that there were ten thousand strangers, twenty thousand citizens, and four hundred thousand slaves, and it was a similar disproportion that obliged masters every where to render the condition

of slaves most deplorable. They were bought, sold, tamed, employed, beaten, mutilated, or destroyed exactly as beast were: and, worse than beasts, they were put to torture, and deprived of the means of defence lest they should endeavour to make themselves free. The Greek slave-holders reduced the whole system into one short proverb, which passed from them to the Romans, *Tot hostes, quot servi,* and their history exemplified the adage, for slaves often mutinied, and the slaughter of a million hath been called the salvation of a state.

The Romans maintained the same absolute dominion over their slaves, and for the same reason. Hence it was, that, when it was proposed in the senate to distinguish slaves from freemen by a certain dress, a senator opposed the motion, because he thought slaves always too much inclined to destroy their masters, would discover their own superiority of number, and be tempted by it to resist their lords, and subvert the state. The wisest of pagans never imagined universal freedom, and the most just were so far from modern manners that they would be reputed barbarians now. When the slaves of the celebrated Cato had spent their lives in his service, and became through age unable to work, Cato, that exact pattern of punctual pagan justice, would not be at the charge of supporting them, but either turned them off to shift for themselves, or suffered them to starve to death in his own family. Yet Cato was not liable to be called to account by government; on the

contrary, government protected him, and every other slaveholder, in the glorious right of starving an old slave, or stabbing a young one!

Into this disordered world, at a proper period, *God sent forth his Son to proclaim liberty to captives:* the TOTAL but not the immediate ABOLITION of the slave trade. Here two questions rise to view: a question of right, and a question of fact. The question of right is affirmed in the foregoing sermon, and an attempt is made to prove that the enfranchisement of slaves is one act of justice naturally proceeding out of evangelical doctrine. The question of fact, whether the christian slave-holders mentioned in the new testament did actually emancipate their slaves is rather supposed than proved. There are, however, some substantial evidences that the first christians did not traffic in slaves, and that they emancipated such as they had at their conversion as soon as the condition of their affairs would permit. When slaves were so numerous, that one master had four hundred, another five thousand, a third twenty thousand, a fourth a multitude innumerable resembling an army, it became wealthy christians, who probably were not of very high rank, and had not any considerable number of slaves, to act with all possible caution, and to unite prudence with benevolence. Had they annexed manumission to baptism, undoubtedly slaves would have accepted the condition, and two great evils would have followed: the church would have been a crowd of unprincipled men, who would have dis-

graced the holy profession by ignorance and profligacy; and the state would have been justly alarmed, lest christians should arm slaves, subvert government, and set up a secular kingdom. It is a character to the gospel that it was embraced by freemen, that in the history of its progress slaves seldom appear; that when they do it is without compulsion; that on embracing christianity they were admitted to full religious liberty; and that the manumission of them was left to the discretion of the master, to be effected as soon as possible without damage to religion, or giving umbrage to the state. No other state of the case accords with all the circumstances of it.

Let any man examine the Greek and Roman maxims of managing slaves, and which, brutal as they are, are absolutely necessary to render servitude safe. Then let him inquire whether a primitive disciple of Jesus could observe these maxims. Could the mild and merciful christian assume the haughty air necessary to a slave-holder to keep his slave at proper distance, lest he should once suspect himself of a species equal to his lord? Could a christian, who had been taught not to be angry with his brother without cause, not to resist evil, to let his communication be yea, yea, nay, nay; could he rate, revile, beat and torture his slave? yet slaves could not be managed to profit without all this! Could he, who was bound on peril of his destruction to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to harbour strangers, to visit the sick and imprisoned; could he consult his own worldly in-

terest so as to neglect all these? yet on condition of performing all these kind offices slaves were not worth keeping. How then was it possible for primitive christians to buy slaves, or to hold them in hand?

To these general observations, one in particular may be added in proof that christian masters actually got rid of slavery as fast as by any prudent means they could. The first disciples of Jesus, drinking of the pure water of life at the spring-head, took no oaths, bore no arms, shed no human blood. A disapprobation of war includes a detestation of captivity, the first fruit of war. They thought, wars and fightings originated in depraved passions. Their wisdom was pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy, in perfect agreement with the second great commandment, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

The truth is, there were almost from the beginning two sorts of christians: the first, genuine disciples of Jesus, aimed only to form a *church;* the other meant to form a *state.* Unhappily for the credit of religion the last succeeded, and introduced all the maxims of secular empires, rank and subordination, licentious inactivity and horrible slavery, oaths and arms, and the shedding of human blood, and so forced monachism upon reluctant nations under the name and in the place of christianity. Even these mistaken christians have acknowledged that it is a part of christianity

to liberate slaves : but the other class, though they fell into disgrace, and were distinguished in different countries by many odious names agreeing only in this, that they were non-catholics, retained the primitive faith and manners, and while they practically asserted their own freedom, taught the rights of all mankind.

These two do not always go together, and, to omit other countries, France affords an example of the most pointed abhorrence of personal slavery at home, along with a code of colonial law establishing on barbarous principles absolute and perpetual slavery in her plantations. It was in the year 1315 that Lewis X. issued an ordinance, which declared :—That all mankind were by nature free-born : that many of the common people were held in servitude for the faults of their ancestors : that the kingdom was called the kingdom of Franks : that the king, by the advice of his grand council, determined the fact should accord with the name : and that therefore all slaves should be enfranchised upon just and reasonable conditions. The French lawyers do consider this ordinance as putting a final period to slavery in France, but they do not allow that freedom originated in it : on the contrary, they affirm on the testimony of ancient and authentic writers that, although they know not the source of the privilege, which effaced the idea of pure slavery in France, yet they have full proof that the Franks were originally free : that they were none of them slaves : and that if any foreign slave entered the country crying *France and liberty*, the state pro-

tected him in the enjoyment of freedom, so that his master could neither recover his original cost, nor his future service without his own consent. They, therefore, regarded this ordinance as the restitution of an ancient allowed right, which later customs had violated. In 1571 a merchant of Normandy offered to sale at Bourdeaux several Moors, but the parliament of Guienne by a solemn decree set them all at liberty, because France, the parent of liberty, did not allow any slavery in the kingdom. In the reign of Henry III. a Spanish man of war ran ashore by distress of weather near Calais. The governor understanding there were aboard two or three hundred Turks, Moors, and Barbarians, whom Spain had enslaved by the fate of war, seized the slaves, and sent them to the king at Chartres. There, as they had been instructed, they placed themselves kneeling, and naked as they had been abroad, on the steps of the church to which the king was going to hear mass. On his majesty's arrival, in a tone which only distress can utter, they cried *misericorde*, *misericorde*. The king observed them, and after dinner assembled his council to deliberate ; and neither the credit of the duke of Guise, who used all his interest, nor the memorial of the Spanish ambassador, who claimed the slaves for his court, and who urged the good understanding then subsisting between the two crowns, and further, that accident, not design, had brought them to Calais ; nor any other reasons could prevail against the doctrine that no slavery could be endured for a moment in France, and the slaves

were declared free. Soon after, they were shipped at Marseilles for Constantinople, and every man was complimented with a crown-piece.

The black code, as it is called, or the royal edict for the government of negro slaves in the plantations, is dated Versailles, 1685. It consists of sixty articles, of a few of which this is the substance. No negro slaves shall marry without the consent of their masters: the children of slaves belong to their masters: no slave shall be suffered to carry any walking sticks or offensive arms, nor shall slaves of different masters gather together in companies, night or day, under any pretence whatever, on pain of corporal punishment, in some cases of imprisonment, in others of death: whatever a slave acquires by his own industry, or by the liberality of others, or by any other means, shall belong wholly to his master; and no person, slave or freeman, child or relation, shall be allowed to claim any share, all promises and obligations of slaves being null and void, they having no power to dispose of any thing: no slave shall be suffered to execute any public office or commission, or to negotiate any business, except for his master: he shall not be allowed to give evidence in any cause civil or criminal, and in case he be heard in evidence, his deposition shall not afford any presumption, conjecture, or shadow of proof, but shall be used only to direct the judges where evidence may be elsewhere found: no slave shall be a party in any civil or criminal process for the reparation of outrages and excesses committed against slaves:

If a slave shall strike his master, or his master's wife, his mistress, or their children, so as to fetch blood, or on the face, he shall be punished with death; and all offences against freemen shall be severely punished; in some cases with death: a fugitive slave shall, for the first time, have his ears cut off, and shall be marked on the shoulder with a flower de luce; for the second he shall be hamstrung, and marked with a flower de luce on the other shoulder, and for the third he shall be put to death: masters shall not be allowed to torture or mutilate their slaves, but they may chain them, or beat them with rods or cords whenever they think their slaves deserve correction: in general, slaves shall be accounted moveables, and shall be subject to the same laws as all the other chattels of their masters. The lawyers of France observe that this is a code of slavery in form, and that the servitude of negroes in their colonies is nearly equal to that of Roman slaves.

Pains have been taken by many gentlemen to prove that there is no necessary connection between slavery and cruelty, and this may be true of a few domestic slaves: but whence, except from the necessity of the case, have all the laws and maxims of ancient and modern slave-government proceeded? Whence this uniform barbarity? The nerveless Orientals, too idle to kill any thing else, behead and butcher slaves. The Greeks, though never famed for sincerity, were always reputed liberal and polite; yet the Greeks tortured slaves. The high spirited republicans at Rome, who stu-

bed a Cæsar for attempting to make himself their master, were themselves the most despotical of mankind to their slaves. The French, who were never reputed cruel, while they paid an enthusiastical homage to liberty at home, governed their plantations with a rod of iron. Even Britain, just in her laws, and gentle in her manners, equal in her zeal for liberty, and more successful in obtaining it than France, hath been alike inhuman in her colonial government of slaves. Whence then could cruelty proceed but from a conviction that many slaves could not possibly be kept in order without it? It was extorted, as it always must be, by necessity. What except corporal punishment can be inflicted on a slave? Would you imprison him? He is in confinement. Would you banish him? He is banished. Would you fine him? He hath no property, his rags are not his own. Would you separate him from his wife and children? They are his master's, not his. What remains? Only one thing: corporal punishment, which must be increased in proportion to his offences: cut off his ears for the first; cut the tendons of his hams and lame him in both legs for the second; for the third kill him, and, if there be a God and a future state, let him complain to him, and get redress if he can: but perhaps there will be no future state, perhaps a negro hath no soul, perhaps, too, there is no God!

The African slave-trade hath long been a distress to individuals; and now, if a judgment may beformed by the numerous petitions which have

been presented to parliament, the general voice is for the TOTAL ABOLITION of it.

There is no difficulty in determining the nature of this trade: it is confessedly unjust; and the danger to the state from the quantum of slavery in a plantation is not hard to guess. There is in Jamaica a tax or fine laid upon such as keep fewer than three white to one hundred black servants, and it is said there are in the island about thirty thousand, perhaps, more whites, and one hundred and seventy thousand negroes. Hence follows the necessity of severity. In Barbadoes the disproportion is less, if, as it is said, the whites be twenty-two thousand, and the negroes only seventy-two thousand. At St. Kitt's, the inhabitants are about forty thousand, of whom thirty thousand are blacks; and at Nevis the whites are reputed about two or three thousand, and the negroes six thousand.

Nor is there any difficulty in answering the argument taken from the supposed natural inferiority of the negroes. Perhaps this may not be true; and if it be, the clear conclusion is, that the wise ought to protect and not oppress the weak.

It hath been affirmed, that the condition of the Africans on the slave coast is so wretched, that it is an act of mercy to transport them to the European plantations. Do the negroes think so? And have the planters any Omiah to send back with this good news to their countrymen?

The real difficulty lies in the immediate dependence of the plantations on the slave-trade, for in those sultry climates the clearing of woods, the cultivation of sugar, rice, and tobacco, require labours which, the planters affirm, none but negroes can perform: for this purpose an annual cargo of Africans is necessary; and in the year 1771, forty-seven thousand, one hundred and forty-six were exported, and of these the Liverpool merchants carried more than twenty-nine thousand. The direct produce of these, on a moderate computation, amounts to one million and a half sterling, and the indirect advantages which Britain derives from their labours in the plantations are beyond computation.

Gradually to emancipate the present slaves and to convert them into a yeomanry, and to supply future labourers without violence, are two desirables of infinite consequence; but the difficulty of effecting these ends is far beyond the comprehension of those who have only private and partial information: however, it may be believed they are both within the reach of legislature, with ample indemnity to the planters, and without diminution to the state; but by what means must be left, as it ought to be, to parliamentary wisdom. Mean time several considerations encourage people to hope that this great evil will in due course be removed.

The total abolition of proper and absolute slavery hath been effected in feudal states, as *England*

and *France*, without any inconvenience, and with innumerable advantages. Why should not the same effects proceed from the same cause in the plantations? Would not free negroes, properly treated, propagate their species in the plantations as well as on the coast of Guinea? A growth of negroes would render importation unnecessary.

The Spaniards have made trial of a gradual enfranchisement of their slaves, and no ill consequences have followed. At the Havannah the purchaser of a slave is obliged by law to enter the name and the price of the slave in a public register, to allow him one day in every week to work for himself, beside Sundays. The earnings of this day, if he choose to work, are secured to him by law, and as soon as he is able to purchase another day the master is obliged to sell it to him at the price of one fifth of his original cost, and so likewise the remaining four days at the same rate as soon as the slave is able to redeem them, after which he is absolutely free.

Some gentlemen have made trials similar to this, in the main, in the British plantations with great success, and the Americans are daily experiencing the good effects of their efforts to the same purpose. What should hinder others from imitating examples good in themselves, and successful in the issue?

Some of the best informed commercial writers in Europe affirm that the slave trade obstructs

another trade better than itself: that Africa is the best situated for commerce of any quarter of the world; that from Port-Sallee to the Cape of Good Hope is an extent of about three thousand leagues of coast; that its rivers are of the first magnitude, as the Nile and Nubia on the north shore, which fall into the Mediterranean, the Niger which empties itself into the Atlantic on the west, the Congo, the Zairi, and the Loango, south of the line, which fall into the Ethiopic ocean on the west side, beyond the gold coast, the Natal, the Prio St. Esprit, the Melinda, and the Mozambo, which empty themselves into the Indian ocean on the east side of Africa; that the country is populous beyond credibility, and that if proper measures were pursued a greater quantity of European produce and manufactures might be exported thither than to any other country in the whole world; that there are rich mines of gold and silver, and the finest copper in the world; that many parts, and particularly the banks of the rivers near the gold coast, and the slave coast, are capable of the best cultivation; a temperate, fertile, healthy and manageable soil; that cinnamon, tea, coffee, spices, ginger, cotton, rice, pepper, fustic and indigo, have some of them thriven to admiration, and all might do so by proper management; that wheat and barley are in plenty and perfection; that the woods abound with valuable timber, rich fruits, and precious gums; that there are camels, horses, elephants, and almost all sorts of beasts; that ivory, hides, wax, ebony, feathers, sulphur, civet, salt petre,

emeralds, aloes, and a thousand other articles of traffic, abound in the immense kingdoms of Africa; and that at the entrance of the rivers into the sea there are excellent harbours, deep, safe, calm, covered from the wind, and capable of being made secure by fortifications. These are not reveries of landlopers, but true facts reported by seamen and merchants from actual observation of the coast, and the African islands, Madagascar, St. Helens, Cape Verd, the Canary and the rest; and they add, that the numerous emoluments of African commerce are capable of amazing augmentation; that such augmentation is very practicable; that the treasures of Africa are inexhaustible; that nothing which could be cultivated there could possibly interfere with the produce of Britain; that the amount of African trade must be esteemed so much clear profit to the nation; and that nothing but the SLAVE-TRADE obstructs all this.

The Dutch have humanized the savages of the spice islands, who were as barbarous as the African negroes; and it was a maxim with them to attach the natives to themselves by proffered advan tages of traffic more than by force of arms, which they never used but to preserve the dominion they had acquired by commerce. The mighty power of the Dutch in the East Indies originally sprang from a very small beginning. Nine merchants of Amsterdam subscribed 70,000 guilders, fitted out four ships, which sailed from the Texel 1595, and founded the Dutch East India company, whose ex-

tent of territory and immense riches are known only to themselves. It is the slave trade that prevents the Europeans from forming similar settlements in Africa; for it is impossible to conciliate the Africans while we stir up wars among the negro princes for the sake of making captives of each other for sale.

The history of the South Sea company, and the Assiento exhibit a contrast to the Dutch prosperity in the east. The Spaniards, having in a manner destroyed the natives of Spanish America, and having no settlements on the coast of Africa, are obliged to contract with foreigners for an annual supply of negro slaves to work their gold and silver mines. The contract hath passed through several hands. The Genoese first engaged in it, but they made nothing of it. The French succeeded them, and seemed to flourish a while, but in the end they were sufferers. Then the English South sea company obtained the contract, and undertook to furnish 4,800 negroes a year, for thirty years; but the company, like the former Assientists, gained no advantages; worse than former contractors they could not fulfil their engagements, and the contract hastened their ruin. That freemen may be engaged to work in mines; that free negroes may be induced to labour under the line; and that Europeans, if not wrought too hard, may be prevailed on to work in the plantations, are positions incontestible with many; and if they be granted, it follows that the slave trade is a gratification of the ambition and

avarice of a few at the expence of the general prosperity of commercial kingdoms, and the natural rights of millions of the human species. Do the millions of negroes in bondage ever kneel down, clasp their hands, and with dripping eyes look upward? Great Being! with what eyes dost thou behold them!

SERMON XI.

ON SACRAMENTAL TESTS.

Delivered at *Cambridge*, October 30, 1788, at a general meeting of deputies of the congregations of protestant dissenters in the county of *Cambridge*.

MATTHEW XX. 25, 26.

Jesus said; ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they, that are great, exercise authority upon them: BUT IT SHALL NOT BE SO AMONG YOU.

THE most violent prejudice, that ever was formed against the christian religion, is that which is taken from the means employed to support it. People say, and they say truly; a divine revelation, suppose such a thing, must have in itself motives of credibility; and, if it have, force must be in all cases unnecessary, and in most extremely dangerous. The profession of the christian religion, they add, is supported, not by argument, but by secular authority. Christianity therefore is not divine.

We call this, however, a prejudice, and by a very plain distinction we more than dissolve the prejudice; we convert this objection against christianity into an argument in defence of it. Christianity is to be considered in two different views: the one as it is represented in the doctrine and

precepts of Christ, and the other as it is described in the doctrine and precepts of some of his followers. That these are very different, and that the one is subversive of the other, a comparison of the text with the institutes of some christians most clearly proves. The princes of the gentiles exercise dominion over them; but it shall *not* be so among you: this is pure scripture. The princes of the gentiles exercise dominion over them; and *it shall* be so among you: this is christianity corrupted. The first is credible because it is just: the last appears incredible, because Almighty God cannot be the author of a rational religion, so defective in motives of credibility, as to need the aid of secular power to support its credit in the world.

That our Lord speaks here of human authority over *religion*, I take for granted. If proof be necessary, let us observe the words. The princes of the *gentiles* exercise dominion. It was not civil government, then, common to both Jews and Gentiles, which Jesus forbad; but it was such dominion as heathen monarchs exercised, but which the kings of the Jews did not. The written law of Moses was the religion of the Jews, and the legislator had said, ye shall not *add*, neither shall you *diminish aught*. Observe all the words of *this* law, it is your life. The Jewish kings were required to write a *copy* of the law, but they had no authority to alter a word. It was not so with the gentiles; and the lesson that was read to-day immediately before prayer, the third chapter of Daniel, was intended to inform us what dominion the Lord

prohibited in the text. A christian prince must not govern like a pagan; he must not either invent a false religion, or support a true one by force.

By what mistaken management, then, hath it come to pass, that the disciples contradict their master: that in a case of which he expressly says, it shall *not* be, they presume to affirm, it *shall* be. This is the question which we are going to answer, not by quoting texts, but by reporting a few facts, which account for the intrusion of dominion into the church. The narration may serve to shew the injustice of human authority over conscience, and to exculpate modern governors who certainly had no concern in the introduction of it, and of course have no blame for finding it there. Whether they will acquire the praise, as it is in their power, of casting this demon out, must be left to themselves to determine.

Parents and guardians were the first who exercised this dominion. Christianity was first taught in a province of the Roman empire. From thence it diffused itself into all the provinces, where the *patria potestas*, the absolute power of parents over their children was an ancient right. There the condition of minors formed a difficult case. Might a christian guardian of rich pagan minors initiate his wards into the christian church? Could a pagan guardian prevent a christian minor's initiating himself? Was a christian master of a charity school of pagan orphans to be justified by law for incorporating his pupils under age into the christian church? Could a minor dispose of himself?

At Alexandria in Egypt, and at Carthage in Africa the question was agitated. At Alexandria they did receive youths under age into the church. At Carthage a celebrated christian lawyer advised the church to defer the admission of them. In time, however, the interested turned the scale, and the admission of minors, and even of babes almost universally prevailed.

Some apology may be made for the Alexandrians. They had some extraordinary youths in their school. Origen was a young man of forward and uncommon parts, and the church appointed him catechist at the age of eighteen, when seven years were wanting to complete his majority. Seven of his young disciples had the courage to suffer martyrdom, of whom five had been initiated into the church by baptism, for which the other two were preparing. After the time of Origen, the celebrated Didymus was of this school. This child lost his sight when he was about five years of age. He had pleased himself with the hope of becoming a scholar, and had enjoyed his sight long enough to learn the magnitude of his loss. When his heart was ready to burst with grief, he heard somebody read the nineteenth of Matthew, where the Lord speaks of the difficulty of the salvation of a rich man, and makes use of these words, *with men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.* His troubled heart laid hold of the last words, *with God all things are possible*, and he became a petitioner to God to repair his loss by enlightening his mind. A friend said, be not uneasy, Didymus,

for though it hath pleased Providence to deprive you of natural sight, such as flies and other little animals enjoy, yet he hath given you such powers as those, with which angels behold the majesty of God. In brief, Didymus by indefatigable attention became a scholar, eminent in several sciences, so that he was appointed to preside in the school, where he educated many, who were afterwards great men. He dictated and published many books, and in very advanced age, some say his ninety-third year, he departed this life adorned with reputation by his survivors.

In peculiar cases, no doubt, persons may understand and believe the christian religion in early life, and in them it is an act of discretion to dispose of themselves by embracing the christian profession without waiting for forms of human law, which the wisdom of legislators hath regulated, not by peculiar cases, but by the general condition of mankind. The argument for minority doth not apply to infancy, and as a profession of any thing ought not to be imposed upon a child, much less ought the profession of a religion to be imposed upon a natural infant, who in this respect is an irrational animal, that doth not know, and cannot consent at all.

We suppose, our Saviour in the text forbad the exercise of this parental dominion in his favour. It was to his honour that he did so, for had he directed,—impose my name upon all your descendants without their knowledge or consent; introduce the unjust and capricious *patria potestas* of

the Romans into my kingdom, and let the christian church be the wise and the ignorant, the profligate and the pure; he would have rendered his gospel suspected. It would have seemed what it ought not to seem, as if it shrunk from a fair investigation.

This dominion, which hath been exercised for many ages, continues to be so. When children first begin to think, christianity is not proposed to their examination, but they are informed they are christians already disposed of by a contract made for them by proxies, whom they are taught to call godfathers, and godmothers, who promised and vowed three things in their name, that they should renounce Satan and the pomps of the world, that they should believe all the articles of the christian faith, and that they should keep God's holy commandments all the days of their lives; and when they are asked whether they hold themselves bound to perform these engagements of their proxies, each is taught to answer, yes verily, and by God's help so I will.

I hope, such of you, my brethren, as practise the baptism of infants, will not imagine I am censuring you. You baptize infants because you sincerely believe infant baptism is agreeable to scripture, but you do not incorporate them into your churches. You defer this till they arrive at years of discretion; and then, laying aside all compulsion, you admit them because they desire to be admitted, upon proof that they have thought for themselves, and are christians on their own con-

viction of the truth of christianity. This is a case different from that of infant church membership, and extremely so from that of youth in some countries, who would renounce their infant initiation at the hazard of their lives. There parental dominion reigns in all its horrour. Parents are compelled to exercise it, and their children are doomed to suffer all its consequences.

Imperial dominion is a second kind of authority, which christian princes have introduced into the christian church. The title and the power of *Pontifex maximus*, high priest, had been assumed by pagan emperors long before any of them professed the christian religion, and Julius Cæsar was high priest, as well as Constantine. It was an office of great dignity, extensive patronage, and absolute power in the state. When Constantine entered into the christian church he brought along with him all his imperial titles, and his absolute dominion. Like a true politician he joined himself to the most numerous and the most powerful party of christians, and they, being at the same time the least enlightened, and the most depraved of all other parties of christians, taught him to exercise his pagan authority over all his subjects both pagan and christian. They flattered him, that he was a judge of their speculations, which they called articles of faith; that it was his duty to regulate a ceremonial, and to support both by the omnipotence of his imperial power. They persuaded him, this was the christian religion; and they interpreted his dream into divine visions, in order to convince

him, and to bear down the populace, that Almighty God had miraculously raised him up to support a faction, and to oppress the rest of mankind for his glory.

When this first christian emperor issued edicts to destroy pagan temples and sacrifices; when he arranged a priesthood, erected christian temples, and endowed churches, he acted constitutionally; for the pagan *Pontifex maximus* had always been considered as the judge and arbitrator of divine and human affairs. The institution was nearly coeval with Rome, and it was a law of the twelve tables, that no person should worship any new or foreign god, unless authorised by public authority. If the pagan Romans tolerated all religions, it was not owing to a necessity of law, but to a wise though unwritten policy, which usually regulated the affairs of that brave and generous people. Unhappily, Constantine rejected this sound policy, and by becoming a partizan, and taking a side, threw all the empire into a confusion, which issued in the dismemberment and destruction of it.

Imperial power over the religion of the people fell with the empire into the hands of various civil governors, and in this country it resides in ours. The legislative power have adopted a plan of faith and practice prepared by the clergy of one party, and the executive power hath the prerogative of supporting it. *The princes of the gentiles exercise authority over them, and it shall be so among you!*

A third kind of dominion I call, for distinction sake, *feudal*. In former times a set of adventu-

rers issued out of their forests, subdued a country thinly inhabited, destroyed or enslaved the natives, divided the lands among themselves, peopled their wastes with captives and slaves, denominated themselves lords, and ruled without controul. Men, women, children, cattle, utensils, the natural and artificial produce, all were the property of the lord, and his will their only law. When vast districts had been so peopled, and when these feudal lords began to think of civilizing their slaves, they parcelled out their lands, and erected manses, which in time became villages, in each of which they set up a building for the service of God, placed a priest to preside over the religion of the tenants, endowed the service with house and lands, and ordered the payment of what are now called tithes. On the demise, or the removal of the incumbent, the lord, not the tenants, appointed his successor. The tenants were not supposed capable of judging, and they were never consulted. Hence no affection in the people, and no emulation in the priest. This dominion of patronage remains, although the reason of it hath long since vanished. In barbarous times, pagans and slaves, incapable to judge because deprived of the means, apt to mutiny because galled with a yoke of bondage, and in a country where the supreme governor was only the strongest feudal lord, and when there was no law, no civil order, no safe and regular succession, it might be prudent to suspend the right of election; but how can this argument be urged against an enlightened, peace-

able, and well governed nation of freemen? They select their friends, choose their professions, employments and diversions, prefer their wives, appoint their physicians, nominate their representatives in the state, free in all when they do not interrupt civil order; and why the same men so capable in other cases, may not elect their ministers, who can assign a satisfactory reason? Assuredly, this text cannot be quoted:—among the Gentiles *they that are great exercise authority over them, but it shall not be so among you.*

To mention only one article more. *Hierarchical* power is a sort of dominion, which the text forbids. It is, I think, a popular error, but it is not, I presume, an error of this assembly, that the hierarchy of *Rome* originated with such plain men as you, the mere teachers of primitive christians, then denominated, as the inspectors of a road, and the overseers of any company were, bishops. Your societies have no idea of establishing christianity; they have not even the scheme of popery in contemplation. Your congregations have order, but no authority. One member claims no authority over another member within your churches; and one of your congregations does not pretend to exercise authority over any other congregation. Had Christ our master and Lord delegated his authority to any individual, or to any collective body, he would have sown the seed of a spiritual monarchy, which to have supported itself must have become a secular dominion; and the head of

it a worldly power able to contend with and subdue emperors and kings; but he did not institute such an authority at all, and no man can shew his warrant for the exercise of it. Fraternal order he did institute, but *dominion* he expressly forbad; and Jesus is guiltless of all the oppression that hath been exercised, and all the blood that hath been shed by his ill-informed followers in his name.

Numa Pompilius, the second king of Rome, ages before Jesus was born, was the man, who framed for purposes of government a pagan hierarchy, and monks were the men who introduced it with success into the catholic church. With catholics it is a common saying, if St Benedict, the father of western monachism, had never preached, St. Peter, the apostle of Jesus, might have gone a begging. There is, moreover, this difference between the pagan and the papal hierarchy, the first only regulated a ritual which left opinion free, but the last, beside a ceremonial, established articles of faith.

The Catholic church of *Rome* was of little account, and made no figure before the council of *Nice*, and it owes its splendor and power chiefly to two events: the removal of the seat of empire from Rome to Constantinople by Constantine, and the inundation of the monks. When the people of Rome chose a monk for their bishop, since known by the name of Gregory the great, their state was very low. At the beginning of the sixth century, they had only one king in the world in their community, Clovis, King of the Salii, a na-

tion of Franks; (all the rest were pagans or arians:)but when Gregory became bishop of Rome, he employed monks to extend his empire every where. Into this country he sent one Augustine, accompanied by forty other monks, in his own style, to convert the nation to the christian faith; that is, in our's, to impose upon a free people by the aid of the civil power, monachism in the name of christianity. Austin desired a conference with the British christians, who, without interrupting government, had been long peaceably cultivating their lands and adoring their God. The Britons sent a deputation to meet him, with directions to observe his deportment. If he should appear to resemble Jesus in meekness and lowliness, they were to give him the right hand of fellowship; but if he should behave with haughtiness, they were to return as they went. Austin received them with insolence, and took the tone of authority. The Britons, open to reason but averse to force, returned. The barbarous monk, better acquainted with his missal than with the new testament, and more true to the secret orders of his master at Rome, than to the prohibition of Jesus in the text, pretended that the rejection of *himself* was contempt of GOD, and prophesied the destruction of all the British christians. This was soon after effected by the sword, which, it is credible, was unsheathed only by the intrigues of the devout missionary.

The land being thus converted, more than seven long centuries did a succession of monks con-

tinue to fascinate the wise, and to frighten the weak, into zeal for mysteries which none of them understood, into absolute obedience to a foreigner, who was both a secular prince and a high-priest, and who governed by his will, or by a code of foreign law, and into the loss of all that their remote ancestors had held most dear. By a wise order of providence, in time the ill produced its own cure, and the oppression became so general and so intolerable, that an inquiry into the cause began, and by due process inquiry ended in the reformation. A noble design, but executed only in part. Had all dominion over conscience been banished, every thing else would have fallen into its own proper place; but though monks were expelled, idols dismounted, ceremonies reformed, and foreign authority disowned, yet that, which had produced all abuses, remained, dominion over conscience,only it was vested in the king.

By the way, it is not accurate to speak of a constitution in church and state, as if the church were half the state, or as if the British constitution consisted of two independent empires in alliance, because the truth is, the executive power distributes the religion of the state by the clergy, exactly as the same executive power distributes the wealth, the protection, and the law of the state, by other classes of state officers. We do not say, constitution in law and state, or in army and state, or in exchequer and state, for all these are creatures of state, branches of civil government; and such is the church.

To return. Under this authority, protestants, who had been in exile for resisting foreign dominion over conscience, returned home, and without a blush, exercised the same kind of dominion over their fellow subjects, some of them too their fellow sufferers. Ecclesiastical government was the fatal rock on which all reformers dashed. Once allow the principle, that conscience will admit of other than *self*-government, and you introduce confusion and every evil work, to determine *who* shall govern, the Presbyter, the Prince, the Bishop, or the Pope.

From the reformation to the revolution oppression excited inquiry. Some examined the original records of christianity, others studied the rise, the nature, and the extent of civil government, together with the ancient usages of our remote ancestors, and the most concluded that tyranny in every form, and in every degree, was an interruption of social happiness; and that of all countries in the world, Britain had the deepest interest in making her inhabitants perfectly free.

Protestants of those times examined the affair of dominion to the bottom. By reading the genuine scriptures, they found, Christ had not empowered any one christian to rule the conscience of another, or any one society of christians to impose laws of religion upon another. They observed, he had expressly forbidden the exercise of all dominion of this kind. By studying civil government, they understood that a good civil magistracy took cognizance of only overt acts, which disturb the peace

of society. By reading our ancient records they concluded, that authority over conscience was as unconstitutional in this kingdom as it was unjust in itself. They objected, that Queen Elizabeth, on one day, by sound of trumpet, received the whole nation into her church, and then held all fast bound by arbitrary laws. They remarked, that subscription to thirty or forty speculations of the schools contributed nothing to the peace of society, but that the imposition of it tended only to divide, disturb, and distress; that it was unjust to oblige men to declare their unfeigned assent and consent to all things contained in a book, which compelled them often in every year to pronounce a sentence of inevitable destruction on all Arians and Socinians, and yet, when the same people died, to pronounce them dear brethren, and to pray that their own souls might rest with theirs in heaven. They added many other objections against the book. They rejected canonical obedience to an ordinary upon oath. In brief, they refused to conform; and for non-conformity they suffered fines and bonds, exile and death. I own, it is not in my power to censure this numerous host of christians. Would I, a freeborn native of this enlightened country, exchange my christian liberty for a state of such servility? I would not. To say nothing of the gospel, the Briton in my soul, (forgive the expression) a laudable pride of birthright would forbid me.

The justice of these remonstrances, and others proceeding from the same love of liberty, carried

conviction into all mens' minds, and in due time produced the glorious revolution of sixteen hundred eighty eight; but, glorious as the revolution was, it was not, however, perfect; for although liberty was declared the unquestionable birthright of all Englishmen, yet liberty of conscience was offered to a large part of the nation, only on condition of their resigning some of their most honourable birthrights; and taking the sacrament according to the usage of the church of England was made a test of competency to hold any civil or military office. This was done much against the will of the king, and many members of parliament, and all the disinterested part of the nation.

Some noble lords of the upper house left upon record a protest, which clearly discovers what they thought of this remnant of ancient tyranny. This is part of it.

"We dissent. 1. Because it gives great part of the protestant freemen of England reason to complain of inequality and hard usage, when they are excluded from public employments by law; and also, because it deprives the king and kingdom of divers men fit and capable to serve the public in several stations, and that for a mere scruple of conscience, which can by no means render them suspected, much less disaffected to the government.

"2. Because his majesty, as the common and indulgent father of his people, having expressed an earnest desire of liberty for tender consciences to his protestant subjects; and my lords the bishops having divers of them, on several occasions pro-

fessed an inclination to, and owned the reasonableness of such a temper; we apprehend it will raise suspicion in some mens' minds of something else than the care of religion, or the public, and different from a design to heal our breaches, when they find that by confining secular employments to ecclesiastical conformity, those are shut out from civil affairs, whose doctrine and worship may be tolerated by authority of parliament; there being a bill before us by order of the house to that purpose; especially when without this exclusive rigour the church is secured in all her privileges and preferments, nobody being hereby let into them who is not strictly conformable.

" 3. Because to set marks of distinction and humiliation on any sort of men, who have not rendered themselves justly suspected to government, as it is at all times to be avoided by the makers of just and equitable laws, so may it be particularly of ill effect to the reformed interest both at home and abroad at this present conjuncture, which stands in need of the united hands and hearts of all protestants.

" 4. Because it turns the edge of a law (we know not by what fate) upon protestants and friends to the government, which was intended against papists, to exclude them from places of trust, as men avowedly dangerous to our government and religion: and thus the taking the sacrament which was enjoined only as a means to discover papists, is now made a distinguishing duty amongst protes-

tants, to weaken the whole by casting off a part of them.

"5. Because mysteries of religion and divine worship are of divine original, and of a nature so wholly distinct from the secular affairs of politic society, that they cannot be applied to those ends; and therefore the church by the law of the gospel, as well as common prudence, ought to take care neither to offend tender consciences within itself, nor give offence to those without, by mixing their sacred mysteries with secular interests.

"6. Because we cannot see how it can consist with the law of God, common equity, or the right of any free-born subject, that any one be punished without crime. If it be a crime not to take the sacrament according to the usage of the church of England, every one ought to be punished for it, which nobody affirms: if it be no crime, those, who are capable and judged fit for employments by the king, ought not to be punished with a law of exclusion for not doing that which it is no crime to forbear."

To reasons so substantial it should seem unnecessary to add any thing; I will however take the liberty to subjoin a few other remarks.

This iniquitous test affects the royal prerogative. In a mixed monarchy, like this, where the legislative power commits the executive power to one person, who is obliged by the nature and necessity of the case, to discharge his high trust by employing officers to represent himself, a sacramental is an improper test, because should the monarch ob-

serve men ever so capable of serving the state, how much soever their talents and their integrity might recommend them, yet this unrighteous law, more suitable to a bigot than a prince, would forbid the sovereign to appoint them to office.

Nor is this test less inconsistent with the wisdom that constituted parliament. If not receiving the sacrament according to the usage of the church of England do not disqualify a man for sitting in parliament, why doth it disqualify him for the office of a tidewaiter? Do we require less to qualify a man to hold our most sacred trusts, our properties, our liberties, and our lives, than to fit him to watch the landing of goods at the custom-house?

Some complain of a profanation of a sacred institute. Whether we, sinful men, have any religion, or not, surely there are some, who have given unsuspected proofs of piety; and they say, we always think of the Supreme Being with the most profound reverence: we consider the worship of him, with the deepest veneration, as the most serious and important business of life: we adore the father of mankind for all his works, and chiefly for sending his Son to enlighten our minds, and to regulate our actions; and when we behold the holy institutes of a kingdom not of this world, now imposed upon the wicked, and now refused to the good, diverted from the original end of their appointment, and prostituted to secular purposes, we blush and tremble at the sight.

Nor let it be once imagined that we, who detest impositions of this kind, are selfish for doing so.

We know no men, who have more reason to complain of the sacramental test, than the established clergy. By the rubric they are required to *repel open evil livers from the table of the Lord;* but by the test law they are compelled to admit communicants of no faith, and of profligate manners. Should a conscientious clergyman, after proper notice given, refuse to administer the sacrament to qualify an atheist for holding an office under government, he would expose himself to a law suit, which might end in his ruin.

Even bad men have an interest in the repeal of the test; for some, who are nominated to offices, know themselves unworthy communicants, and they think if they receive the bread and wine *unworthily,* they render themselves *guilty of the body and blood of the Lord:* should such men be compelled to add this to all their other sins; and can such a crime be necessary to the safety of a state?

But it is not this sort of men, it is not atheists deists, and profligates, upon whom the test law is intended to spend its force, but another, a class of virtuous characters exposed to scorn for imaginary offences called schism and heresy. Yet what have states to do with heresy? They create the crime, and then punish it; but could statesmen be persuaded to let religion alone, there would remain no such crime to be punished. Among the brave and virtuous Goths, there was no such word in all their primitive codes of law; and opinions the most preposterous do no injury to the state, as

daily experience proves. Where mens' lives are inoffensive, their speculations ought to be free. To illustrate this, I beg leave to read a part of what an ancient heretic wrote to the parent of modern orthodoxy, I mean Augustine of Africa. The writer was a Manichean, and I choose one of this denomination, because of all heretics, ancient and modern, the Manicheans are treated, and by the orthodox (as catholics call themselves) ever have been treated as the most dangerous members of society, and the last to be suffered to live in any christian state. So very distant have their notions of christianity always been from those of the catholics, that the latter have never allowed them to be christians.

Augustine had called a Manichean a pagan schismatic, and this is a part of his answer. "You call me a pagan schismatic. The pagans think, they honour the Deity by erecting altars, temples and images, and by offering sacrifice and incense. I have quite other notions. I consider myself, if I be not unworthy, a living intelligent temple of the excellent majesty of God: I honour Christ his Son as his express image: a mind well-informed, I think, is an altar of the Deity, and pure and simple adoration the service and the sacrifice. How then am I a pagan schismatic? For your parts, you have converted pagan sacrifices into love feasts, idols into martyrs, and you worship them, as the pagans do their gods, by votive offerings: you appease the manes of the dead by wine and festivals: with pagans you celebrate pagan solemnities by

observing their days: and of their morals you have altered nothing: it is you then, not we, who are pagan schismatics, and nothing distinguishes you from other heathens but your holding separate assemblies.

" You ask me whether I believe the gospel? Is that a question to put to a man, who observes all the precepts of it? I might with propriety put the question to you, because your life gives no proof of it. I have left father, mother, wife, children, and whatever else the gospel requires me to renounce; and you ask whether I believe the gospel! I perceive, you do not understand the gospel, which is nothing but the doctrine and precepts of Jesus Christ. I have renounced silver and gold, and I carry none in my purse: I am content with daily bread, and I am free from anxiety about to-morrow, what I shall eat, and wherewithal I shall be clothed; and you keep asking me, whether I believe the gospel! You behold in me the beatitudes of Christ, the very beatitudes which constitute the gospel; and you ask me whether I embrace the gospel! You see, I am poor in spirit, I am meek, pacific, and pure in heart; I mourn, I hunger, and thirst after righteousness; I suffer hatred and persecution for Christ's sake; and you doubt whether I believe the gospel! We ought no longer to wonder at John the baptist, who had seen Jesus, and had heard of his works, for sending to inquire whether he were the Messiah. Jesus, with the utmost propriety and dignity, did not condescend to return a direct answer, but referred

him to his works: *the blind receive their sight, the deaf hear, the dead rise*, and so on.

" You say, to receive the gospel is not only to obey the precepts of it, but to believe all things written in it, of which the first is, the nativity of God. This article, however, is not the whole gospel; the precepts of it is the other essential part. Now, if you accuse me of not believing the gospel, because I do not admit the history of the birth of Christ, I may, and with much more reason, accuse you of not believing the gospel, because you contemn the precepts of it. For the present, then, we are both alike." Not to be tedious, the substance of the remainder on this article is this: " I the Manichean, do not believe the genealogies and the history of the birth of Christ, and you, Bishop of Hippo, do admit them. You do not practise the precepts of Christ, and I do practise them. Thus, on your own principles, neither of us admits the whole gospel; but, it must be granted, you have chosen the easy, and I the difficult part; and Jesus hath not affixed the promise of salvation to your part, but he hath to mine. He hath said, *ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you;* but he hath not said, ye are my friends, if ye believe I was born of a virgin."

You see, brethren, I have quoted the worst reprobate I could find: a man who has the presumpto contradict the oracle of the church, catholic and anti-catholic; a man who taxed a saint, and a great saint, with holding a heterodox faith, and living a wicked life, differing in his morals nothing

from a heathen; a man, who criticised even the sacred scriptures, whose four gospels began with the baptism of Jesus, and who discarded the two first chapters of Matthew and Luke; a man, however, of undeniabe virtue: now I ask, not St. Augustine, who supported his answers by reminding his opponent that the emperor was his catholic brother in Christ, but I ask you, who, though not saints, are, however, men of sense and piety, would any one of you charge himself with suppressing by force such a heretic as this, or shedding his blood? Undoubtedly, you would say of such a one, *The Lord judge between thee and me, but my hand shall not be upon thee.* Perhaps, you would go further, and not only abstain from injuring such a man, but you would render him all the kind offices in your power, considering if he were not a christian, he was at least a neighbour, whom the Almighty had commanded you to love as yourself.

In fine; various as christians are, there is an undisputed point, in which they all agree: *all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.* You are, more than forty congregations in this county worshipping God under the protection of the act of toleration: a handful; but were you ten thousand times as many, and had you the law and the sword in your hands, could any man think it right for your majority (and you would have no other argument) to impose your faith and mode of worship on the rest of the inhabitants? I know you reject the thought, on

account of both its absurdity and injustice; for you distinguish between establishing yourselves and establishing christianity. To seat yourselves in all places of honour and profit, to the exclusion of all other natives, would be unjust; and to pretend to establish christianity, which can no more be established than beauty or wit, would be absurd. Let us ask our neighbours, would they approve of our putting them in the condition into which they have put us? What would they say to us, if we should pretend, that unless all officers civil and military received the sacrament sitting, in our meeting houses, law would be violated, the treasury exhausted, the constitution subverted, and Great Britain and all her possessions fall into immediate ruin! A midnight tale fit for the tenth century, but not to be repeated now! A seditious tale fit for nothing but to summon men to arms and barbarous deeds, to determine which party hath the majority! What conceivable connection can there be between receiving the sacrament according to the usage of any church, and distributing justice, routing an army, or collecting the customs?

To conclude. Nonconformity is a noble cause, and we are engaged in it not by misfortune, but by choice, as many before me can attest. By contending for the sufficiency of scripture, we mean to acquire credibility to the gospel; for the gospel itself is credible, and they are human additions and gainful appendages that bring it into contempt. By denying the dominion of parents over the religion of their descendants, we plead the cause of

posterity, the liberty of every individual to be, or not to be a professor of the christian religion, as his unbiassed reason and conscience shall direct him. By denying imperial authority over conscience, we declare our aversion to despotical government and pagan religion, which was nothing but show. By rejecting prelacy, we confirm the doctrine of the text; we provide for the improvement of the mind, by affirming the liberty of all christians to act agreeably to their own convictions; particularly we plead the cause of young men preparing for the ministry, that their minds may be unshackled, that they may not be obliged to allow a conclusion before they have examined the premises, that they may have no temptation to prevaricate for reward, and no fear of dismal consequences for thinking differently from Greeks and Africans, who lived in times illiterate, and in places remote from us, who are a people as far superior to them as men civilized are to savages, or, at best, to men in the first stages of civilization. Instead of the usual train of, first faith, then quotation of authorities, and lastly reason, we would first reason, then build faith upon evidence, and reject all authority to call us to account, except that to which Jehovah hath said, *every knee shall bow.* By disowning feudal authority, we only claim that for our consciences, which all other men in a country free from vassalage have claimed for their persons and properties. We affirm the plainness of the gospel, the capa-

bility of all men to judge of it, and the right of every one to be free, virtuous and happy. We put one God in the place of many Lords. When we represent the ancient springs of tyranny, and narrate the inundations of it, we are not insensible of the merit of our ancestors, who cut channels for it, and set bounds to the flood, saying, *Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.* When we ask those, who have it in their power, to dry up the lingering streams that remain, and to restore us our original paradise, where the voice of oppression shall not be heard, we ask no favour, we claim a *birthright*, which we never forfeited by any crime, which it would be ignoble to despise, and abominable to sell for *a mess of pottage.*

May God in all things be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON XII.

A DISCOURSE,

Delivered at the Meeting-house in *Fenstanton, Huntingdonshire;* Jan. 23, 1782, at the interment of Mrs. SUSANNA BIRLEY, aged 29 years, late wife of the Rev. Mr. BIRLEY, of *St. Ives;* and also at that of their only child, aged ten weeks.

MY BRETHREN,

THE most refined human pleasure in this world is social pleasure, or that, which arises from communion with others; and, of all social pleasures that, which arises from a wise and virtuous conjugal union, is the highest. Delicious, however, as this enjoyment is, there comes a period in life, which reduces the happiest man to the wretchedness of saying, concerning the lovely object of all his joy, *bury my dead out of my sight.*

At such sad seasons, at the graves of all we value in this world, we are called to exercise the most noble, but the most difficult of all devotional acts: here we are to treat God as God, to resign to him his own gifts, to acknowledge him as Master and Lord of all, to confide in his wisdom and goodness, and cordially to allow, admire and adore the rectitude of his government. May you, my brother, * be enabled to exercise this act of devotion now! And may we, who surround you, become

* Mr. Birley.

soft by sympathy, and yield to such impressions as these gloomy objects are fitted to imprint! *When* the last *deep sleep falleth upon* our families, *then God openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction.*

How shall we comfort this afflicted family? * Or what shall we say to edify you, ye numerous spectators of their grief? For my part, I cannot look at this scene without recollecting a similar case in scripture history full of instruction and consolation. I will beg leave to mention it, because it may instruct us all, and because it may comfort our weeping friends; for it is some relief to mourners to have a partner in woe.

Son of man, said God formerly to the prophet Ezekiel, *behold I take away from thee, the desire of thine eyes with a stroke, yet thou shalt not mourn.* On this case we make the four following reflections.

First. *A social life is consistent with the highest religious attainments.* Ezekiel was an inspired prophet, yet, like his predecessors the patriarchs, and like his successors the apostles, he was a married man. There is, therefore, nothing in domestic life inconsistent with the duties of religion, nothing incompatible with the noblest offices, and the highest enjoyments in the church. Revealed religion is rational and manly, and they, who teach it, are best taught themselves by such a train of events as exercise all their fellow creatures. It is not in a lonely cell, it is not in a legend, either

* Mrs. Birley's family, the Ashtons of *St. Ives.*

learned or devout, it is by our own fire-sides that we are domesticated: it is in a circle of parents, wives and *children whom God graciously gives his servants;* it is in an intercourse with domestics, a personal concern in affairs of real life, that we feel we are *men of like passions with you;* and there we are driven to the sweet necessity of finding out the doctrines and the duties of a religion to be publicly recommended to your faith and practice. There also we are forced to learn what will cool the passions, animate the spirits, and support the good man under the burdens, which Providence dooms him to carry. Hence public usefulness, hence instructions that come home to the business and bosoms of mankind. The church of *Rome* has thought fit to reverse all this natural order, by training up her stately church-officers in sullen gloomy recesses, by enjoining a single life on all her ministers, by exchanging the man of sentiment and sympathy for that solitary, unfeeling thing called a monk. The pretence is chastity; the true reason is secular policy.

Secondly. *Domestic blessings are subject to abuse.* If you think proper to read, when you go home, the twenty-fourth of Ezekiel, you will observe, that what is called in one verse *the desire of the eyes,* is said in another to be that on which men *set their minds.* This is a beautiful and emphatical expression, full of meaning, and too descriptive, alas! of what happens every day to us all. Providence gives us respectable parents, amiable wives, lovely children, and on these we *set*

our minds, pitching our hearts on them, as if they were infallible grounds, on which we might erect spacious habitations of felicity; on them we place our hopes, on them we depend for happiness, with them we incorporate too often both our duty to God, and our delight in his empire; in a word, them we not unfrequently eye as our supreme good. Fancy gets loose from reason and religion, and says, this son hath an undaunted courage; I see the gallant youth in future serve my country, and immortalize my name in the navy or the army: that other boy is active and acute; I see him in a future day accumulate riches, and do good to mankind in a busy mercantile line of life: a third is studious and grave; I see, I hear him in the pulpit pleading the cause of truth and virtue, *turning many to righteousness, and shining as a star in the* christian *firmament for ever and ever.* This frugal industrious daughter I see in future the soul of a great family, conveying order, plenty and piety through the whole; and that gentle girl, soft and delicate in all her manners, adorn her own sex, polish the other, and render herself the paradise of all that know her: and all this my eyes, and the eyes of their good mother shall behold, and then, in hoary old age, surrounded with childrens children to the third and fourth generation, *full of days, riches, and honours*, and satiated with life, we will say, *Lord now lettest thou thy servants depart in peace*·····My brethren, what if we should pass by, and see a friend in such a reverie? Should we not pity him for erecting such

mighty hopes on a bottom of human frailty? Should we not tremble for his to-mmorow? Should we not exclaim, this benevolent but unskilful man hath *built his house upon the sand!* This is spring-time; but when the fall of the year arrives, when *the rains descend,* when *the floods come,* when *the winds blow, and beat upon his house,* what, if he do not love God more than these, if he be not well versed in the character of the supreme governor of the world, what will become of this unhappy man!

Yet all these hopes are natural, all these desires are just, all these prospects are parental, and to a certain line they are rational and religious; and God sometimes gratifies them all. The evil lies in *so setting our hearts* on the accomplishing of our plans, as to take the liberty of rebelling against God, when he sees fit to blast all our opening prospects. I say when God sees *fit,* for my weeping friends, you must forgive me, if in executing this office assigned me by her, whose spokesman I have the painful honour to be, I venture to affirm, in spite of the turbulence of our passions, that God does always that, which, all things considered, is most right and fit to be done. To admit this truth will give you a momentary pain, because it will discover, that excessive grief, and discontent with providence proceeds not from reason and religion, but from misguided passions: but you will receive ample amends by the long pleasure, which the dominion of religion will produce.

We observe, then, Thirdly, that *God is as wise and good in sometimes defeating all our designs*

as he is at other times in gratifying them. A hard lesson; but sooner or later it must be learnt! God is an uniform being, always consistent with himself. His supreme excellence is love of order, and all his government is a maintenance of it in all parts of his empire. Whether he save life or destroy it, he acts from the same invariable principle. In all cases he is too wise to do any thing wrong, too good to do any thing unkind. This doctrine can never be too much inculcated, and in the case before us it is highly applicable and effective.

To elucidate this let us observe two things. First, our earthly social pleasures are either the *ends*, for which we were created, or they are the *means* of conducting us to some other end more great and noble. Is man, with all his godlike powers, created for the sole purpose of enjoying a conjugal or parental union? Imperfect enjoyments at the best! Is he, who is capable of the highest attainments of knowledge and virtue, and of the enjoyment of them for ever and ever; is he, who is formed for the glorious purpose of knowing, imitating, and enjoying the first great cause in eternal worlds, undisgraced by vicissitude and death; is he sunk to the sad necessity of basking in the sunshine of one short day, and pleasing himself like a beast (for beasts have pleasing sensations) with animal associations! No, all these are means, and God and moral excellence are ends of our existence. Rise man, rise into your dignity. Consider the chain of causes and effects, and reason

thus, for to enable thee to reason thus, thy heavenly father committed thee to the tuition of these sable masters: say, if the intelligence, the wisdom, the virtue, of one beloved companion gave me so much pleasure, what should I enjoy if I were intimately *acquainted with God!* If the loss of one such bosom friend give me so much pain, what nameless agony should I feel, were I ever to be so ignorant and wicked as to forfeit the enjoyment of God! Parents, wives, children, what are you all but single drops! God is the fountain, from which you came; God is the source of felicity to which you go, and thither my heart shall follow you.

Let us observe,—Secondly, that Providence never removes our christian friends till they have finished their work, and then they go to receive their wages. A genuine disciple of Jesus Christ *follows* him here *in the regeneration, works out his salvation with fear and trembling, serves the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears* struggles *through much tribulation,* and at length arrives at the gate of the kingdom of heaven; and shall I wish this good soul for my sake to be deprived of his reward? Shall I wish him detained from such a bliss, the object of all his prayers, and tears, and hopes, merely to accommodate me? Would that be fair? What! when I know too, the price he must pay for gratifying my humour? Shall I doom him to sleepless nights and solitary days? Shall I require of him to drag about *a body of sin and death* as I do? Shall I wish him

in a condition to *say in the morning, would God it were evening, and in the evening, would God it were morning?* Not I. No, rather let me be just to *my own hurt;* let me *honour them that fear;* and now that they have fought the good fight, let me agree they should go and receive the crown. Let me imitate him, who, though he *fasted, and lay upon the earth,* and wept and prayed, while his child was sick, yet, on receiving the news of his death, *arose from the earth, washed and anointed himself, changed his apparel, and went into the house of the Lord,* and justified his conduct by saying, *now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.*

This leads me to the last observation on the case of the prophet Ezekiel. *There are works of more importance for the living to do, than that of weeping for the dead.* Far be it from us to censure the humane sighs and tears of families afflicted like this. It would argue a worse than brutal insensibility not to feel on this mournful occasion. Sorrow pent up in the heart would soon break it. It has a natural discharge, let it flow and disburden the soul. Weep, afflicted family! and allow us to mingle our tears with yours; but let us all remember, that our business here is to do more than weep; that weeping is a small part, and that to acquire knowledge now on the spot, and when we return home to reduce it to practice, are duties of far more importance than that of bedewing the dust with our tears.

The prophet Ezekiel was commanded not to lament his own trouble; but to attend to the greater troubles of his country and the church of God. Let us imitate this bright example. Let us examine how we may most and best serve society. Let us address ourselves to the discharge of all the duties of life. We owe a duty to God: let us be submissive and obedient to his will. We owe a duty to our fellow creatures: let us be just and benevolent: let us pity the wicked, love the righteous, and do good to all mankind. We owe a duty to ourselves: let us not disable ourselves by grief, but let us hold body and soul sacred, and let both be employed in manly and christian exercises; for these bodies are redeemed to rise again, and these souls are to be for ever with the Lord. Our obligations, far from being discharged by our losses, increase as the friends of virtue expire; and we should study to keep society from missing absent benefactors, by performing such kind offices as they would have performed, had they continued to live in a world abounding with objects of beneficence. As these considerations should have weight with us all, so they ought to be most accurately and nicely balanced by those who sustain public offices in the church, for this is to embody the doctrine of God our Saviour, and to render christianity visible even to roving eyes.

Hence, then, let us depart, penetrated with two just and seasonable reflections. Let each consider, first, how soon he may be brought into the condition of this distressed man, who survives his

chief earthly joy. We are all of us neighbours, many of us intimate friends of this family. Their condition affects us. They lament, and we mourn with them, and our sympathy is a little small relief to their woe: but, were it proper for them to break silence, would they not say to us, *weep* also *for yourselves;* behold in us the uncertainty of earthly enjoyments; next week perhaps the scene may change, you may suffer as we do, and we like you may stand by and look on. Is there one of you, my fellow christians, in all this assembly, who can stand up and say, let the whole world die, I have not one object of my esteem, no not one, to whom my heart hath a peculiar attachment? If there were one such person, we should doom him to depart from the society of men, he would be too bad for even a brute, he should sink into marble or brass. But you, my brethren, you have passions, and your passions have objects, and objects so perfect in your eyes, that it would be a great misery only to suspect you should be deprived of them. Well! suspect it not. Hope in God. Enjoy your day. Enjoy to-morrow too. Let fancy, pleasant artist! magnify and multiply your sum. Yet, after all, the fatal time must come, and you like us must put on mourning too, and be *left*, (cold and comfortless word!) you must *be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain*, a signal to warn, and so to preserve society.

Must such a day come? I ought then to prepare for it. May to-morrow be the day? I ought then to prepare immediately, this present moment.

But what will prepare me for such an event as this? This is our last reflection. True religion is the only preparation for affliction. The religion of the afflicted is prudence, patience, submission, content. These virtues were all exemplified in our Lord Jesus Christ, and by his example they are both recommended and enforced. Happy for us, if we exemplify the maxim of the wise man, *it is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men, and the living will lay it to his heart.*

We never pray at a grave, lest we should mislead our little children, who know not yet their right hands from their left in their way to heaven. We would not ensnare their unwary steps, or tempt them to form one idea favourable to that exploded popish practice, praying for the dead. Let us depart from this dreary receptacle of the dead in peace with God, and with all mankind; and, all animated with social universal love, let each as he retires pray, *that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, may be with us all.*

SERMON XIII.

THE ADVANTAGES OF AN EARLY RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

Preached at Mr. Dan Taylor's Meeting-House, *London*, June 7, 1789, in behalf of a Charity School.

I SHALL read you a passage, which you will instantly allow ought to be the language of us all; that is—

PSALM CXVI. 12.

What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?

By putting this language into the lips of different people, which would be proper in the mouth of every one of us, I conceive that proper answers might be given, not only pointing to a duty, but to the degree in which that duty should be performed. *What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?* Why, who are you? Relate to us your history, and say what it is that lies upon your mind. Can you speak of Jehovah's benefits to you? Probably you will say, we have nothing great in the eyes of the world to talk of; but we have received benefits from Almighty God, which appeared great in our eyes; they are really great, because they are for our good, for the good of our families, for the good of our neighbours,

for the good of those that are afflicted; in a word, for the good of society at large? What is that? Why, say you, I can write, I can read, I can work, and I can never enough admire that God who put it into the hearts of my parents, my good parents, to bring me up to live in this present world; by this means they have confirmed and established my health, which I should have lost in idleness; by this means they have put it in my power to support the partner whom I esteem; by this means they have enabled me to train up a small, some may say a large family, and to bless those with my industry whom I am bound by every tie to support, and to teach to support themselves; by this means they have enabled me to do good to my neighbours: I have been enabled to say, through mine honest industry, my cup is full; yea, my cup runs over; hold my neighbour's cup to take the overplus, and let me bless those that have nothing to comfort themselves with, the sick and the old, who cannot work, and who are dependent wholly upon charity; by this means, I thank God, I can consider myself, as all politicians who treat upon government do, an useful member of society. I, with these hands, circulate property and wealth; these connect my country, in some sense, with the most distant parts of the world; these give the industrious something to export, and these receive, and, blessed be God, through my industry, can pay for what they import; and thus such as I, however we may look in the eyes of the splendid and unthinking, such as I are the pillars

of society, the glory, the wealth, and the safety of a nation. And do you, good honest, industrious man, say to-night, as you ought;—*What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?* I answer—Pay your vows to him now in the presence of his people, and, by giving something out of your honest earnings, enable these poor children to grow up into your joy; teach them to read, teach them to write, teach them to work, teach them, in one word, to bless society, and to feel the good and the happiness of being industrious and diligent men like yourselves.

Perhaps some others of us may say, God be adored for all his benefits towards me; if I had been trained up to be ever such a conspicuous member of society, if God had not bestowed something more on me, I had been undone; I should have been a stupid, a wicked man, at best a curse to society. Why, what benefit has been bestowed upon you? Why, say you, I have had, and it was provided by the invisible God, of whom I knew nothing, for I was a babe, but I had from my bountiful parents a *christian education.* As soon as I could speak, they taught me to sing, not profane and wicked songs to deprave the heart, but they taught me to sing the praises of God, whose name I uttered before I knew him; they carried me to places of public devotion; they endeavoured by all possible means to stir up my attention; they inquired whether I knew what I heard; whether I remembered the passage of the word of God that had been spoken from; whether any

thing that was said in the discourse affected me; they did more, they used to lead me by my little hand to the throne of grace in the family; nay, some of our parents did more, they took us into the closet; they led us there to be alone with them and God; and, because we did not know what to say, they said—Lord, bless the lad, open his understanding, give him to flee from youthful sin, save him from the poisonous contagion of those families in which children are corrupted; in short, they did every thing, we must be their witnesses, they did every thing in their power, and what we, in our infancy, could not but observe. Have not some of us wondered what made our good mothers' tears to flow down their cheeks, when they taught us our lesson? And when they said, *Behold the lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world,* we were affected, and we have learned since at what; and to-night, when we say, *What shall we render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards us?* we mean, what shall I do to express the sense I have of the goodness of God, in giving me an early religious education. Do you thus inquire? I say again, pay your vows in the presence of all God's people this evening, and let your hands and your gifts express what you mean, by putting it into the power of the guardians of these children to give them a christian education; for in this school, the guardians and governors do the part of parents; they adopt these infants, and they do the best that can possibly be done for children;

they teach them the scriptures; they teach them to sing the praises of God; they habituate them early to attend worship; they do every thing to make them wise and good, happy inhabitants of the world to come, as well as useful members of society now. For my part, I have but an occasional pleasure of seeing what this great city exhibits of good; but I own to you, there is a sight, a very simple sight, that always stops me short, and fixes me, to feast on a kind of heavenly joy, and that is when I see a charity child, a poor charity child, with his little bible under his little arm. Do I see an eastern prince in possession of a mine?—No: I see a mortal intelligent being, as far superior to the greatest monarch in the east as a man is superior to an insect. That book, children, when you come to be old, will be your comfort, it will be meat, drink, and clothing to you; that book, children, if you get it by heart, will be to you eyes, when you are blind and cannot see to read the scriptures; and when you are forgot, as old people frequently are, that book will be health, wealth, comfort; it will be substantial support to you in death, and it will be heaven to you after this present state. Oh give, good people—for compassion's sake give—give these poor children some bibles; give them some clothes; open the gates of bliss, and let the little innocents enter in with you: do it by the generosity of your charity to night!

Perhaps a third class of people—I will not teaze you with many, for I am sure your good sense will

make up for any thing I may omit;—but perhaps a third class will be uttering along with us such an exclamation as this, *What shall we render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?*—and we ask, who are you? Come in, thou blessed of the Lord, and join in our songs. Who are you? Why, say you, I am (and I have the honour and the happiness now not to blush at my character, though I am often in tears) a sincere and modest follower of Jesus Christ; but my early life was not christian; I grew up in ignorance, my mind was full of prejudice, my heart was full of wickedness, I loved sin, I despised—I blush to say it —I despised, I hated God. And how did you feel in that part of your life? Say you, I was a compound of vice and misery; my actions were wicked, my heart depraved, and I was never happy. I tried many projects; but there was a void which I could not fill; and a voice cried out for justice, which I could never hear. At length, say you, there came into my mind REFLECTION, like a king into his army, and it would have audience; it would be heard, and heard in the dead of night, when all the world were absent from me: it spoke thunder, it roused my attention, it cleft in sunder my hard and callous heart; and I cried, *Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner!* The pains of reflection made me try to get rid of the conviction, but I could not. No, you could not; mercy fixed it there as a nail in a sure place; when you rose, it rose and went with you; when you went into com-

pany, it accompanied you; and every now and then spoke home to your conscience, and said, *Remember, for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.* I could not eat, that is, I could not enjoy my food; I could not visit; amusements became a pain to me; I could not rest, because I was not at peace with my God. And what then? Oh, say you, I shall never forget, to the day I die, the felicity I found in discovering the love of God in Jesus Christ to wretched sinners like me. I fell upon the earth. I said, is it possible? I thought again and again, *God is love.* My conscience recollected that passage of scripture, which said, *He will not break the bruised reed; he will not quench the smoking flax.* I took heart, I sighed, I prayed, in short but sincere ejaculations; I pleaded his holy promises; I said to him, master, is it nothing to thee that I perish? I received from the holy scriptures a full answer: the Lord taketh not pleasure in the death of a sinner: have I any pleasure in the death of him that dieth? He said to the man lying in the dust, shedding tears of repentance, as I live, I have no pleasure in your death. Oh! comfortable expression! a voice from heaven that speaks life to the dead, and says to the self-condemned criminal—Come home again, thou child of man! and I went home again, as it were, to my Father and my God: and now, having pursued this work a great many years, having tasted the pleasures of holiness, and being filled with an abhorrence of sin, I am come to night to say, *What shall I render*

to the Lord for all his benefits towards me? My friend, my answer is this: look at those poor things that await your charity to-night; consider them in a body like your own; do not call them saints yet, but let them grow up as you have done; let them be surrounded as you were with the bewitchery of violent temptations; let them do as you did—fall into those temptations, and then they will feel that misery which you felt; and if you can now enable them to avoid all this, by teaching them where to go for relief, as sick men in this city do for relief for their bodies, though it is not so in some places where they have people sick, and blind, and lame, and poor, and no hospitals, no funds to relieve them;—but put these children into the condition of the poor in this city, and they will recollect, though they may take a large stride into the field of sin, they will recollect, through education prejudices, where God their Saviour is; and when that comes, which will come, perhaps, with a violent head-ache, perhaps with a high fever, perhaps with a trembling ague, perhaps with something that will make them think they are upon the borders of the grave, and that is to a sinner the verge of hell, then education prejudice will make them recollect what their parents or their guardians have taught them. They taught me such a hymn, they taught me such a chapter, I got it by heart, and now I recollect it; now I remember that all they told me about sin was true; and I am a wretch undone. And now I recollect the comfortable passages in the

gospel that speak of the love of God to fallen sinners. And now, for the first time, will I go back, and say, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am not worthy to be a member of a christian church; I am not worthy to be the sheep of such a pastor; but make me as one of thy hired servants; let me return to the blessed house where I received the rudiments of the knowledge of Christ: let me creep behind the door, let me stand in the aisle, let me look to him while I mourn. This is what we want you to put in the power of these children, by giving them a religious education.

I shall only lay before you at present one more class of people who put the question in the text, *What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me?* I will suppose,—but there are only a very few of this stamp, I will suppose—you were born of wealthy parents, nourished up in a lap of down, received a good education, a learned and virtuous education; entered into life, shall I say in full sail, with every advantage of fortune and friends that you could wish; went through that dangerous ocean unhurt; kept your virtue, your integrity, and your piety to God, till now; and I will suppose to-night, that you are in the happy condition of a kind of earthly alien, without a stain upon your life, without any guilt upon your conscience, in the enjoyment of the favour and friendship of God; a chosen child, blest with the blessings of the upper and nether springs;

or, to speak without a figure, blest with every thing in this life that you can wish for, or is good for you; and blest with a prospect, a well grounded prospect, of a glorious immortality. When we surround you, do we not naturally say, what shall this man, this rich, this happy, this good, this distinguished man, who has been freed from all that has troubled me every day of my life, what shall this man render to the Lord for all his benefits towards him? Even the charity children could say, that man owes to God the homage of his body, he owes to God the use of his fortune, he owes to God the tribute of his lips, he owes to God his whole self; it is just and right that he should render to God every thing that he has, as expressive of his obligations for the benefits he has received. I leave the wealthy man to think within himself, in what manner he ought to conduct himself upon this occasion. Oh, barbarian! can you pass these poor things, and leave envy to foster in their bosoms while you excite them to complain,—he has it in his power to support forty of us, and has not the will to support one of us, even for a fortnight, so callous is his heart. God forbid we should make such reflections! Brethren, let us one and all perform the work which Providence has laid before us: and let us do it by saying and feeling the language of our text, *What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards us?*

I will take the cup of salvation; that is one thing: I will pay my vows in the presence of all

his people, that is another thing. It is an unjust man that takes all and pays nothing: he is the uniform christian, who first takes the gifts which his heavenly father bestows, and then returns them, with a generous and liberal hand, to the use of his fellow creatures, for whose sake he was entrusted with them.

My brethren, allow me for once to say, what strikes me upon this subject: I sometimes carry my thoughts forward to the end of this world, to the end of all our meetings, to the end of all cities, to the end of all mankind. I place all the universe before the great Judge. I behold on one side, those whom he calls the sheep, that is, a people instructed by his gospel, directed by his law, and founding their hopes upon his promises. Oh, what a family! He overlooks them all, and can say of every one of them, this is a creation of life; I made this ignorant man wise, I made this wicked man good, I saved this man from the misery into which his own vices had plunged him; and now I survey this new world, as the Creator did the old, and I pronounce it all very good; it is a good one; it is a large one, it is wisely done, it is well done; I do not repent of it; enter you, my disciples, into the joy of your Lord. Now I turn my eyes to his family, and I shall not strain the point if I say, that their hearts all burn with the language and sentiments of my text, *What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me?* Oh! kind and blessed Saviour, didst thou

come down into this our world, and live among us? Oh, patient Master, didst thou bear with the school of which thou wert the instructor? Didst thou bear with them when they forgot their lessons, and didst thou teach it them again? My brethren, let us enter into the feelings of the church at that day, and give Jesus Christ what we ought to give him—honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen!

END OF THE SERMONS.

A

DISCUSSION

OF THE

QUESTION

Is it lawful and right for a man to marry the sister of his deceased wife?

PUBLISHED IN THE APPENDIX

TO THE

LEGAL DEGREES OF MARRIAGE,

STATED AND CONSIDERED,

By JOHN ALLEYNE,

Barrister at Law.

[THE SECOND EDITION, PRINTED 1775.]

ADVERTISEMENT.

The Author [*of the Tract*—" A Discussion of the Question," &c.] *having been favoured with the sentiments of the Rev. Mr. Robinson, on the subject of this Pamphlet, and permission to print them, takes the opportunity of enriching this second Edition, by introducing into the Appendix, his very valuable Discussion of the Proposition laid before him, respecting the subject of the preceding Letters.*

A

DISCUSSION of the PROPOSITION,

IT IS LAWFUL AND RIGHT FOR A MAN TO MARRY THE SISTER OF HIS DECEASED WIFE.

THIS proposition will bear three different meanings according to three ideas, which we affix to the term MAN. It may mean an inhabitant of Africa, a Jew or a Christian, or a native of Great Britain. We take it here in each sense, and comprise our meaning in three propositions.

I. It is RIGHT for a WILD AFRICAN to marry the SISTER of his DECEASED WIFE; because it is agreeable to THE LAW OF NATURE.

II. It is RIGHT for a JEW, or for a CHRISTIAN, to marry the SISTER of his DECEASED WIFE; because it is agreeable to THE LAW OF REVELATION.

III. It is RIGHT for an ENGLISHMAN to marry the SISTER of his DECEASED WIFE; because it is agreeable to THE LAW OF HIS COUNTRY.

The first object of our contemplation, then, is MAN IN A STATE OF NATURE, unacquainted with the regulations of a civilized state, and uninfluenced by the directions of scripture. The word law signifies rule of action. Now the rule of action, to such a man, is THE PURSUIT OF HIS OWN HAPPINESS. When he pursues that, his conduct is

right, and the action, that procures it, is properly called rectitude, or virtue. We affirm then, that it is a VIRTUE in such a man to MARRY the SISTER of his DECEASED WIFE, because the action procures his own happiness, and because the procuring of happiness is the law of his actions.

Three things are essential to the procuring the happiness of a man in a state of nature, in a conjugal commerce. The first is a moderate gratification of his sensual appetites. The second is the peace of his conscience. And the third is the probability of obtaining his end, that is, the procreation of children. Were man a disembodied spirit, we must exclude *the gratification of sense ;* were he a beast, we must exclude *the exercise of conscience ;* and, if a conjugal commerce were an *end*, we must exclude *the pro-creation of children ;* but as the procreation of his species is the end, and as a conjugal commerce is only a *mean* to obtain that end, we are obliged to include these three ideas in a marriage, which such a man consummates for the procuring of his happiness. Now these three ideas will all apply to the marrying the sister of a deceased wife, and therefore such a marriage is obedience to the law of nature, which obliges man to procure his own happiness.

Man, in a state of nature, will feel sensual appetites, and he will soon find that it is equally unproductive of pleasure, not to indulge them at all, or to indulge them too much. Hence he will obtain the two ideas of gratification, and moderation ; the first will induce him to associate with one of

his own species, and the last will prevent his associating with more; but neither the one idea, nor the other, nor the union of both, would prevent his marrying the sister of his deceased wife, and, it seems beyond a doubt, that no man in that state, considering such a marriage in a view merely sensual, could imagine one objection against it. For it would be one step towards happiness, as it would be a gratification of sensual appetites.

But an *intelligent* being, cannot be happy in that which his intelligence doth not approve. His intelligence will produce in him a knowledge of right and wrong, and the gratification of sense, however moderate, could not make him happy, if his conscience condemned it. But no man in a state of nature, will be able to find an incongruity in associating those ideas, which are essential to the marrying the sister of a deceased wife; but the objects will harmonize, and place his conscience in such tranquillity as moral sense approves. Whence could the idea of *injustice* arise? Not to the *deceased*; for it would express his regard for her, to advance her nearest resemblance to her place, and publicly attest his respect for her family.—Not to the children of the deceased; for they would meet with more tenderness in an aunt, than in a stranger, and, he might justly think, that could the deceased be consulted, she would advise him to commit their education to her *own sister*, rather than to a *stranger*. Nor could he conceive the marriage would injure either *himself* or his new *wife*. We cannot imagine, therefore, whence an idea of wrong

should arise. If we imagine any recoilings of nature independent on previous intelligence, we fancy what does not exist. Suppose two sisters stolen in their infancy, carried to sea, shipwrecked on the coast of Africa; taken up and carried into different parts; and both grown up without knowing one another, a man should first marry the one, and, after her decease, the other; do we really think, that either of them would feel the recoilings in question? The exercise of intelligence is essential to moral sense; and we know of no object of intelligence, that could excite in a man unassisted by revelation, the idea of *injustice* in the *marrying* the *sister* of a *deceased wife,* and where the intelligence hath not that idea, the conscience is at peace.

Were a man to *ravish* the *sister* of his *deceased wife,* he would deprive another of *liberty.* Were he to commit *adultery,* he would evidently deprive another of his *right:* and from either act, an idea of injustice would arise; but nothing like this can be said of a man's *marrying* the *sister* of his *deceased wife. This marriage* then is a second step towards happiness; for it sits quite easy on his conscience.

The third essential is the probability of its answering the END, that is, THE PROCREATION OF CHILDREN. The *marrying* the *sister* of a *deceased wife,* is a probable mean of obtaining children, which is the end, and therefore the marriage is agreeable to the law of nature, which requires man to use every mean, that is likely to answer his end, which is the production of happiness. *Such a mar-*

riage, then, is *agreeable* to the *law of nature;* for it procures his happiness; the pursuit of which is his only rule.

Thus then, a moderate gratification of the senses secures the happiness of the *body*. A moral sense of the rectitude of an action, that of the *mind:* and the probability of obtaining children, secures the happiness of the *condition*. These will all apply to the *marrying* the *sister* of a *deceased wife*, which, therefore, is agreeable to the *law of nature*. But they will not apply to beastiality; nor to an unnatural commerce with the same sex; nor to marriages in the ascending and descending degrees of *consanguinity*, (which latter would destroy the veneration, so essential to parental authority, and filial obedience, the fitness of which, is obvious:) nor in general, to the marriage of own sisters, as modesty would be thereby annihilated, and the end could not be obtained; because inclination would be previous to ability, and a commerce begun too soon, would defeat the end of commerce at all. Nor would they all apply to polygamy, for it is certain, the increase of the species bears no proportion, where polygamy is allowed, to that which is found in countries where it is prohibited. The marriage of own sisters does not appear to be *absolutely unlawful*, because the children of the first man were *necessitated* to marry so, and because the God of nature cannot, consistently with his perfections, render the violation

of order necessary. However, such marriages appear to be *highly inexpedient.*

If we join history to our speculations, they will become FACTS, and we shall find that many nations have actually thought, and acted in this manner. The Egyptians, Persians, Macedonians, and Athenians, allowed the marriage of own sisters. The Romans allowed the marriage of sisters of deceased wives: Cæcilius Metellus married the sister of his deceased wife, and Brutus married his sister in law, Porcia. The heathens were so far from ideas of turpitude, in marriages of consanguinity and affinity, that in this, as in all other cases, they carried, for want of revelation, their ideas too far. It makes nothing against our argument to say, that the heathens did not argue exactly as we do; we only say, that many of them did, that all of them might have reasoned thus, and that when they did act agreeably to this reasoning, they acted with that rectitude and virtue, which *their* state required.

II. It is *right* for a Jew, or for a CHRISTIAN, to MARRY the SISTER of his DECEASED WIFE; because it is agreeable to THE LAW OF REVELATION.

The GOD of nature being the author of religion, there can be no doubt, but that the laws of both are in perfect harmony. Indeed a conformity between the dictates of nature, and the precepts of revelation, is the best proof of the divinity of the latter; for revelation can never be destroyed, if it appear to be written reason. Human reasonings on the laws of nature are only conjectures; but un-

der a state of revelation, the infallibility of the revealer removes all conjecture, and what might be doubtful before becomes certain then. The rectitude, then, of the marriage of a Jew, or Christian, consists in a conformity to the express commands or prohibitions of the lawgivers. When Jews and Christians practise the positive institutes of Moses and of Christ, their conduct is holy.

The positive institutes of religion are of two sorts. The first consists of moral duties, more clearly stated, and more easily proved, than they could have been by the light of nature. The second sort consists of ceremonial usages, which rather direct the *manner* than the *matter* of a moral duty. The first are inviolable and eternal, and depend not on the will of the lawgiver; but on the nature of things. The last depend wholly on the legislator's will, and are changeable at his pleasure. Some of the Mosaic, that relate to *marriage*, are of the last sort; but all the institutions of Christ are of the first; for he proposed a religion, which should adapt itself to all mankind, and which should bring things back to their state at the "beginning," that is, to the state of man in innocence.

We will divide this article into three parts; LAWS —PRECEDENTS—and EXPLICATIONS; with a special view to the question, whether a MAN may MARRY the SISTER of his DECEASED WIFE?

1. Revelation allows that marriage is honour-

able in ALL, and every Jew and Christian may marry.

2. It allows EVERY MAN to have HIS OWN WIFE, and each WOMAN her OWN HUSBAND: the relation is considered as a kind of property, and an intercommunity is expressly forbidden. Moses allowed divorces, because there was no moral turpitude in them; but Jesus Christ forbad them, except in cases of adultery, only on account of civil inconveniences.

3. Polygamy is expressly forbidden. THOU SHALT NOT TAKE ONE WIFE TO ANOTHER IN HER LIFE TIME.

4. Revelation allows AFTER-MARRIAGES, and it extends the dominion of conjugal law, no farther than NATURAL life.

5. It forbids JEWS and CHRISTIANS to MARRY HEATHENS. To the Jews MOSES said, *ye shall make no marriages with them.* And to Christians St. Paul said, *be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.*

6. Revelation allows people to marry WHOM THEY WILL, ONLY IN THE LORD, which must be the case in the instance before us; because,

Lastly, there is an EXPRESS COMMAND for a MAN to MARRY his BROTHER'S WIDOW; which is of a ceremonial kind, and seems calculated to preserve estates in particular families, as well as to prevent the extinction of the families themselves: and this alone fully proves the moral excellence of such a marriage; for God never did, nor, con-

sistently with his perfections, ever can appoint a ceremony, that violates moral rectitude.

But we shall perceive the case still clearer, if we attend to PRECEDENTS.

Abraham married Sarah, his HALF-SISTER.—Isaac married Rebekah, his SECOND, and Jacob married Rachel, his FIRST COUSIN. The patriarch Judah caused his second son to marry the WIDOW of his ELDEST SON, and the history of it convinces us that, the MARRYING of a BROTHER'S WIDOW, was a custom long before its institution by Moses. Amram, the father of Moses, married his AUNT, the five daughters of Zelophehad, married their FIRST COUSINS. And Tamar, the daughter of David, expressly declared to her ravisher, who was her BROTHER, that, if he would speak unto the king, *their Father, he would not withhhold her from him.* Now, from all these precedents, it may be fairly inferred, that it was the practice of the people of God, to *marry* their *near relations;* that, in general, they acted conformably therein to their sense of the revealed will of God; and that, if any of these marriages were agreeable to the divine will, those of men with the sisters of their deceased wives, are the least exceptionable, and the most likely to be free from every idea of unholiness.

We now attend to EXPLICATIONS. By which, I mean, such circumstances of the sacred history, which throw light on this affair. It is highly probable, that a people, who allowed marriages in nearer degrees, MARRIED the SISTERS of their

DECEASED WIVES: and, it is ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN, that BROTHERS actually MARRIED the WIDOWS of their DECEASED BRETHREN. Now, if this practice were criminal, as it would have been, if it had been contrary to the known meaning of the positive precepts of the lawgiver, how comes it to pass, that the prophets, who reproved and recorded the vices of their countrymen, never once mentioned this practice as a sin? Jesus Christ himself, who was questioned on this article, does not in any hint insinuate the evil of the practice. The case before him was the marriage of *seven brethren* successively to *one woman.* The enquirers, indeed, did not ask the legality or the illegality of the practice: but it is not supposeable, that HE would have waived so fair an opportunity of censuring it, had the connections been criminal. The silence of the inspired reformers, is a presumptive explication of the law, in favour of the question.

It is equally inconceivable that Jesus Christ, who, by himself, or by his apostles, created all things new, should give NO LAWS on this article. The Jewish ceremonies HE abrogated, the moral law HE inforced, and may it not be presumed, that in all doubtful cases, the general positive law of Moses being abolished, we are referred to natural law? Does not this silence also consent to the RIGHT, and explain the LAW of MARRYING the SISTER of a DECEASED WIFE?

Is it not very unaccountable, that the patriarchs, Abraham and Isaac, should not only marry near

relations theirselves, but that at the approach of death, they should take pains to procure wives of near kindred for their sons, without expressing any remorse for their own conduct, or giving any restrictions to their children on so delicate an affair? It was Isaac's command to his son, go to the house of Laban, thy mother's brother, and take *a wife of* his daughters; that is, *one* of his two daughters. Jacob went and took both, which was contrary to his father's command; but had he taken Rachel first, and Leah after Rachel's death, who could have thought of a breach of his father's command? His father's words imply the contrary, in case he had taken one of the daughters, and she had died without children. *Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. Take a wife of the daughters of Laban. And God Almighty multiply thee.* If one of Laban's daughters die without issue, take the other.

Farther, St. Paul asks, have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles? Have we not the same natural and civil rights under the gospel, which the Jews had under the law? Have we not also near relations, who are christians, and whom we might marry, as other apostles have done? This seems no unnatural interpretation, nor very distant from the scope of the place.

In the reformation of the Jewish church by Ezra, illegal marriages were dissolved; and it is highly probable that, in the general depravity, many had married sisters of deceased wives; yet, though we have a list of a hundred and fifteen marriages,

which were dissolved, there is no mention of one of this kind. All such marriages were deemed legal, as indeed they must have been, if they were tried according to the Levitical laws. So then the law of nature approves the *marrying* the *sister* of a *deceased wife*. No positive law of revelation prohibits it. Various precedents give it the sanction of immemorial custom; and divers circumstances, which immediately relate to the subject, by not reproving the practice, leave it in all its efficiency and force.

Whence then, it may be asked, came the popular notion of the impropriety of such a marriage? We will not attribute it to sordid and mercenary motives in interested men; but supposing the authors and supporters of it upright, we will venture to guess that the opinion came, with hundreds more, from some of the following sources.

1. From *the vague*, and *indeterminate meaning of the words*, which are rendered, *kin—wife*, &c. Moses saith, *none of you shall approach to any that is near of* KIN *to him*. Does the word mean the whole NATION? A man's own TRIBE? The general FAMILY? Or the immediate HOUSE of his own father? In all these senses is the word taken, and the meaning of the term can never be defined, except by the scope of the place. In one place, Moses includes in it *only father*, *mother*, *son*, *daughter*, own *brother* and *sister:* and who can assure himself that he includes more in the term in the passage first recited? The word *wife* is almost as complex as the word *kindred*. *Thou*

shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy brother's WIFE. If the word mean a *married woman*, the prohibition does not belong to this case, for we are not pleading for adultery: if it mean *widow*, as it sometimes doth, it would operate in this case; but if it mean both *wife* and *widow*, it is a vague term to us, and consequently having no determinate meaning with us, is no fixed rule of action or law. While the language, in which Moses wrote, was a living one, a different way of sounding it, might determine it to mean *wife* or *widow;* and when it became a dead language, a different way of pointing, or accenting it, might inform the Jews of its meaning: but to us the law is inefficient, where the terms cannot be defined.

2. By the changing of the figurative idioms of the Hebrew, into literal expressions, and then, taking those expressions, in all the latitude of an English literal meaning. *Thou shalt not approach —Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness,* &c. Do these phrases mean *debauch* a virgin? Commit *fornication* with a prostitute? Commit *adultery* with a wife? Or *marry* a widow? What is a man guilty of, when he is reproved for *humbling* his sister? On these, and on such like phrases, rests many a goodly edifice.—Peace be to those who have the courage to inhabit them!

3. By the confounding of distinct objects of contemplation together. The laws of Moses are moral, ceremonial, political, ecclesiastical, &c. and these are so interwoven, that it is extremely difficult in many cases to disentangle them. Some

were temporary, calculated for the wilderness only. Some were œconomical; so I call those which were to be in force during the whole dispensation: and some were eternal. Supposing then, that there were a law against the marrying of the sister of a deceased wife, the question would return, is it a moral, or positive law? If the latter, it was law to a JEW; but to a CHRISTIAN it is not.

III. It is right for an Englishman to marry the sister of his deceased wife; because it is agreeable to the law of his country.

The word *law* stands for *municipal law*; that is, for a rule of civil conduct, prescribed by the supreme power in a state, commanding what is RIGHT, and prohibiting what is wrong. * In this case, the proof of the two former propositions affords presumptive evidence, that it is right for an Englishman to marry the sister of his deceased wife, because English lawyers define the municipal law of England to be a rule commanding what is *right*, and we have proved that *such* a *marriage* is *right;* in the eye of natural and revealed law, to which the municipal law of England professes to conform.

MUNICIPAL LAW divides into *common, civil, canon*, and *statute* law; we will venture to affirm, that THE MARRIAGE in question is VALID and GOOD, DE JURE, in every meaning of the term.

IMMEMORIAL CUSTOM, from time to time, declared in the courts of justice, is common law. It seems right, according to the true spirit, and allowed regulations of common law, that a man should have

* Blackstone.

liberty to marry the sister of his *deceased wife;* because, if the contrary custom *do* exist, it DOTH NOT so exist, however, as to constitute it common law.

Civil law is the *municipal law* of the *Roman* empire; and civil law leaves an Englishman in full possession of the right of marrying the sister of his deceased wife; because, either it doth not prohibit such a marriage, or, if it do, such prohibition hath no force in England, till it receive a sanction from some other power beside itself; and, consequently, in such a case, it would rest on another ground, upon which ground it must be disputed. *Civil law qua civil law is a non-entity here.*

If the word *law* be taken for *canon* law, that is, for Roman ecclesiastical law, and national constitutions, it will still be true that it is right for a man to marry the sister of his deceased wife; because acts of parliament have rendered it inefficient, when it is repugnant to the law of the land. Such a marriage is considerable in *two* lights. The first is the *holiness* of it.—This entirely belongs to *canon* law, and our temporal courts have no jurisdiction over it in this point of light. The other is *civil inconvenience.*—Temporal courts take cognizance of this, and treat it in the light of a contract. Now, if it can be made to appear to a temporal court, that the marriage of a deceased wife's sister hath all that the court requires, to make a good contract, and that no civil inconvenience follows, the court *ought* to allow the *right*, or *law*, of the action; and where temporal courts allow a right, they ought to provide for the subject's en-

joyment of that right, and not to suffer any other court to expose a subject, to a civil inconvenience for doing that which is lawful and right. Moreover, if it can be proved, either that there was no moral turpitude in the marriage; or that no canon existed as a law, not being confirmed by act of parliament, or rule of action, to the contracted parties; or that, if it did exist, it ought to have no effect on account of its repugnance to the law of the land; in either of these cases the marriage ought to be allowed valid and good.

But the true ground of this question is statute law, that is, acts of parliament. This written law of the land is called *rectum*, or right; not because it constitutes, but because it discovers and declares what is right; and this is the meaning of *magna charta*, when it says, we will not *sell*, *deny*, or *delay* justice and right. Now, if it be right, by the law of nature, and by the law of God, for a man to marry the sister of his deceased wife, an english subject may expect, agreeably to the language of *magna charta*, that subsequent statutes will allow and protect such a marriage, because *magna charta* will not deny right.

Before the reformation, our ancestors considered matrimony as a sacrament, and the regulation of it was left to men, who were guilty of the most intolerable abuses, by the absurdity of many, and by the uncertainty of all, canon laws. In the reign of Henry VIII. statute law pretended to reform these abuses; but we beg leave to remark four

things, relative to the five acts of parliament which relate to this affair.

1. These acts all pretend to make only those marriages void, which are contrary to the law of nature, and of God. If the marrying the sister of a deceased wife, be agreeable to the law of nature, and of God, these acts, by their own consent, have no operation.

2. Lawyers cannot agree about the validity of these acts, and the effect which they ought to produce in a modern case; for that which one declares to be repealed, another declares to be in force. If the law be uncertain, the subject is left without a guide; and if he wander through the carelessness of his guide, he ought not to incur any damage.

3. These acts, are diametrically opposite to one another. The law in Henry's reign, declared that his marriage with his brother Arthur's widow, was contrary to the law of nature, of God, and to the law of the land; and agreeably to this, divorced the Queen, and bastardized her daughter; but in Queen Mary's reign, the law declared that the King's marriage, was agreeable to the law of nature, of God, and to the law of the land; that the Queen ought not to have been divorced; that the daughter was legitimate, and that the whole process in Henry's reign, was contrary to law, equity, and conscience. In the reign of Queen Elizabeth, it was enacted, that all marriages, which are not prohibited by God's law, are lawful. But the marriage in question, it seems, by former statutes, is

both right and wrong, lawful and unlawful. How is the subject to act in this case.

4. It is uncertain to whom the cognizance of the law of marriage belongs. The last clause of the statute of 32 Hen. VIII. ch. 38, has been thought, by the *whole* bench of Judges, to take away the cognizance of it from the ecclesiastical, and to give it wholly and solely to the temporal courts. This opinion, is perfectly agreeable to the law and constitution of this realm; the subjects of which are subject only to law, that is, to a rule of action, which hath received the sanction of the three estates, and canon law is not of this kind. If the spiritual courts claim a cognizance, it can relate to nothing but to the holiness of the marriage; and should they adjudge it unholy, they ought not to be allowed to inflict penalties, and to expose the subject to civil inconveniences, on account of that, which operates no civil inconvenience.

If the validity of the marriage of a man with the sister of his deceased wife, do not appear plain from all that hath been said, it may, however, appear doubtful; and if it appear doubtful, the necessity of a declaratory law will appear beyond a doubt. At present, statutes leave us exposed to canons, canons refer us to the law of God; the law of God, being partly positive, and partly natural; and being expressed in a phraseology of doubtful meaning to us, leaves us in uncertainty: but all these inconveniences might be removed by

one clear, explicit, declaratory law, and the peace and safety of the subject require it.

This whole divides into a question of *fact*, and of *right*. That of *fact* is, whether it be the general practice of Englishmen to marry the sisters of their deceased wives? That of *right* is, whether it be agreeable to their obligations to do so, either as men, or christians, or Englishmen? The first we deny. The last we affirm; and we reason thus. *Fact* is vicious, when it doth not accord with *right*. The municipal laws of England, in regard to marriage, are so far right, as they agree with the positive institutes of our holy religion. The positive institutes of religion, are so far binding, as they agree with right reason. Reason is so far right as it agrees with, and produceth happiness: or, to invert the order, the great Supreme hath established an order in nature. Out of natural, ariseth moral order, or virtue. For the quicker production of moral order, or virtue, and for its better security, positive institutions are written. For the more easy distribution of ideas of moral virtue, and of positive obedience, municipal laws are constituted, either unwritten, as common, civil, and canon law, or written, as acts of parliament. The reason and fitness of things is the fountain, revelation is a channel, in which reason rolls, and municipal laws are pipes, which convey reason to separate citizens in a state. Now, as what comes pure from the fount may come polluted to the citizen, and as, in such a case, the design of legislation would not be answered, legislature

should allow the citizen to complain; and if he were able, to point out the causes; and, if they appeared substantial, they should apply a remedy: but though, a citizen may be allowed, modestly to investigate an imperfection in the government of the state, yet not to reduce his speculations to practice, till they have received the sanction of legislature; for till then, his remarks, must be considered only as humble advice.

To this agree the opinions of wise men, and CICERO may speak for all. *Lex est ratio summa .... Constituendum jus ab illa summa lege, quæ seculis omnibus ante nata est, quam scripta lex ulla, aut quam omnino civitas constituta....Si populorum jussis, si principum decretis, si sententiis judicum, jura constituerentur: jus esset latrocinari; jus adulterare; jus testamenta falsa supponere; si hæc suffragiis, aut scitis multitudinis probarentur.** *Our Saviour's* expression conveys the same ideas, *from the beginning it was not so;* and his apostles declare his design to be a *restitution of all things.*

We conclude then, that it is RIGHT for a man to MARRY the SISTER of his DECEASED WIFE, and that in England it is LAWFUL to do so; because, whatever the legislators might intend, they have not SUFFICIENTLY DECLARED FOR IT, or PROVIDED AGAINST IT. But, as the popular notion often runs against the right, and as the courts of law might not protect the subject in this LEGAL CLAIM, and as a man may not be entirely safe, who MAR-

* De legibus. Lib. I. C. 16.

RIES the SISTER of HIS DECEASED WIFE, IT IS HIGHLY PRUDENT, FOR HIM TO USE ALL CONSTITUTIONAL MEANS, OF OBTAINING A DECLARATORY LAW. To the granting of which, it is humbly presumed, legislation will readily accede, for the production of such great good, to so many of the subjects of these realms.

ROBERT ROBINSON.

Chesterton, Cambridge, July 24th. 1775.

FINIS.

MEMORIAL.

TO THE

TWO CONGREGATIONS

OF

PROTESTANT DISSENTERS,

IN

CAMBRIDGE;

THE

FOLLOWING MEMORIAL

IS

HUMBLY PRESENTED.

1767.

MEMORIAL &c.

CHRISTIANITY owes its institution to the love of God, and is admirably calculated to rectify the disorders, in which sin has evidently involved all mankind; and then only can it be said fully to answer the benevolent designs of its divine author, when the wolf lies down with the lamb, and the leopard dwells with the kid, or, what is the same, when Barbarians, Scythians, bond and free, are one in Christ Jesus; who ceasing to daub with the untempered mortar of party zeal, join toge ther in building a church, founded in faith, and cemented by love, at once glorious to God, and advantageous to men.

It is not now necessary to inquire by what means so many divisions have been made in the church of Christ; it is enough to observe, that they were neither authorised by Christ, nor encouraged by his apostles. The Lord, above all things, pressed the necessity of union and love; and the apostle Paul ordered some of the first churches to mark that man who caused divisions, and to avoid such an one; doubtless because such a dividing spirit was as destructive of their peace as of Christ's command; and wherever encouraged would dissolve the church into parties, till true religion evaporated,

leaving the unhappy partisans only a name to live, while in fact they were dead. If the whole moral law is contained in one word, love; if the whole gospel is a system of love; if love is that badge whereby men are known to be Christ's disciples; if when all the graces of the spirit are reduced to three, the greatest of these three is love; if that legislator, who has enjoined every duty, has, twice in the New Testament, assured us that he requires us, above all things, to have fervent love among ourselves, surely he must be totally ignorant of God, the law, the gospel, human nature, and his own heart also, who can dispense with the absence of so necessary a christian temper for any circumstantial in religion; who thinks himself authorised to divide from a society, and cease to love the members of it, merely on account of some small difference in sentiment, or practice. This I will venture to say, that nothing has so much contributed to weaken the church of Christ, nothing has had so great an hand, in reducing her to her present feeble condition, as the unchristian and impolitic divisions of her members, who ought never to make two churches, where one would do: for while, by such means, they serve a party, they disserve real religion. Such (as a sensible writer says) are friends of the church, but enemies of God; and from such a spirit the Lord deliver all honest hearted christians. If the above-mentioned christian, and pacific tempers are needful any where, if the above reasons are weighty any where, they are at Cambridge; and so much the more

needful there, as the situation is more conspicuous in the eyes of a whole university, than in a small village, or a common market town. Whoever reflects on the former and present state of affairs among the dissenters at Cambridge, will conclude so.

In Mr. Hussey's time, the church was the largest and the most flourishing of any in the county. He left Cambridge in the year 1720: forty-six years are elapsed since, during which time, they have been broken into five or six parts: they are now collected into two, but no man has seen both flourish together: when one has increased, the other has visibly decreased.

It is humbly conceived that there is a voice in this dispensation, and that he who bestows his influences thus, designs to teach us a lesson of unity. The good Lord preserve us from refusing him that speaketh. Since, therefore, one of the congregations is at present without a pastor, it is presumed to be both the duty, and interest of the two societies to become one; the lawfulness and expediency of which may be justified from the following considerations.

First. There does not subsist any difference between the two congregations in doctrine, or discipline, except the single article of baptism; (which also subsists in one of the churches already:) and that difference (as both churches allow) is not sufficient to divide a people; for it is to be observed, that those reasons which will justify two churches continuing asunder, will also justify one church in

dividing into two; but where no such reasons are, it is plain, a junction is lawful. It is taken for granted, that if the two were one, no member would think there was a just cause of separation; and if there is no cause of making two, there can be no cause of keeping so.

SECONDLY.—We have a precedent for the practice in the first churches. Then circumcision, keeping of ancient jewish, or gentile festivals, eating and abstaining from certain meats, were bones of contention among Jews and gentiles: yet it is said, to the honour of Christ, that he made of twain one new man, so making peace: and good reason there was for their being one: the kingdom of God is neither meats, nor drinks, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost: let us, therefore, follow after the things that make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

THIRDLY.—We have also an express command for such a work: Rom. 15. 7. "Receive ye one another;" that is the duty exhorted to: "as Christ has received us;"—that the rule, by which we are to do the duty: "to the glory of God;" that is the end to be answered by a compliance. If Christ therefore has received both churches, both are here exhorted to receive each other. If we have a divine command, an authentic evidence of precedents, and no difference subsisting to tempt us to act contrary, the lawfulness of an union is clear beyond contradiction.

The expedience of the step appears by observing:—*First*:—That it is the true interest of the

dissenters (as of all other associations engaged in one design) to be unanimous. If divisions have weakened the cause, as they evidently have, a junction must of necessity strengthen it: two are better than one, and a threefold cord is not easily broken. To think that this would weaken the cause in Cambridge by reducing two churches into one, is a mistake; for one society of one hundred members is stronger than three of fifty members each, as will easily appear to every considerate person.

Secondly. An union would annihilate all those unbecoming bickerings, jealousies, and cavillings, which almost always attend the members of two societies so near neighbours. Some will always (through mistaken zeal) be guilty of such things, imagining that the weakening of one church is the strength of the other: but when one cause only is on foot, the weakest must perceive that the interest of one is the interest of all; and all the former animosities, being but effects of a division, must needs die with the cause that produced them.

Thirdly. It is absolutely expedient now, when one congregation is broken by an unhappy faction issuing in the withdrawment of several members. This is the ready and, perhaps, only way of reclaiming them; and when the other congregation is conscientiously inquisitive how to act towards those members of the other place, who came amongst them, to carry it at a distance is to behave uncivilly, and looks like want of love: and to enter into close connections, is to weaken and offend a sister church: therefore as they are obliged

to have some, the same spirit enables them to embrace all the church ; and to say all in one word, an union removes the difficulties on both sides.

Fourthly. Such an union would be much to the credit and reputation of religion, seeing it would enable the dissenters in Cambridge to acquit themselves generously to their poor, and to other good works which now are not to be done without burdening subscribers too much. The maintenance of one minister, and expence of one meeting-house being saved one way, enables the people to do more another.—How pleasing the prospect ! A large church walking in love ; a respectable congregation ; a minister well provided for ; poor comfortably assisted ; every thing done with credit and honour: how preferable such a case to the narrow views of any partizan whatever ! and all this noble acquisition (grateful to all but bigots) the easy purchase of the spirit of love !— Robinson begs leave to subjoin : that to all this it may be objected, that though the flourishing state of the people, who make these proposals, must convince all the world that they are constrained to do it only by love, and not for any low sinister ends, yet this is to impose a minister on a whole congregation, whom, though they respect, yet they would not choose for their pastor.—Robinson's reply is this.

That he is conscious of his incapacity; and wishes the Lord had bestowed on him gifts acceptable enough, to serve the people in this case ; and

since the Lord had not been pleased to do so, he nevertheless, earnestly wishes the prosperity of Sion, and hereby promises to cede his pastoral office to any other minister, in whom the two congregations can unite, provided it can be done, and his removal agreed to by (as he does not see why it should not) his own people.

FINIS.

THE

CIRCULAR LETTER

OF THE

EASTERN ASSOCIATION,

HELD AT

HEMEL HEMPSTEAD, HERTS;

MAY 14th. and 15th. MDCCLXXVI.

[FIRST PRINTED, 1776.]

TO THE

PROTESTANT DISSENTING CHURCHES,

USUALLY DENOMINATED

BAPTISTS,

ASSEMBLING FOR

DIVINE WORSHIP,

At Cambridge;	§	Hertford;
Cheneys, Bucks;	§	Hempstead, Herts;
Chesham, Bucks;	§	Hitchin, Herts;
Colnbrook, Bucks;	§	New-Mill, Herts;
Harlow, Essex;	§	Woodrow, Bucks:

This CIRCULAR LETTER is with great respect addressed,

By Robert Robinson,	§	William Nash;
Hugh Giles;	§	
James Sleep;	§	
William Walker;	§	
Isaac Gould;	§	
Robert Baskerville;	§	
Morgan Jones;	§	Nat. Saunders, W. Bedford;
John Geard;	§	William Thomas;
Henry Blaine;	§	
Richard Morris;	§	George Long:

MINISTERS AND MESSENGERS,

REPRESENTING THE SAID CHURCHES IN ASSOCIATION.

THE

CIRCULAR LETTER, &c.

Honoured Brethren;

WE cheerfully embrace this opportunity of publicly addressing you, and of expressing in this manner our approbation of the grand principle of all trust in your societies, the *responsibility* of officers to those who appoint them. In obedience to your own free nomination we have attended this association, and, agreeably to your own directions, we send you this account of it.

It appears, by the several letters sent from the churches in this connection, and by the accounts given by the ministers and messengers present at this association, that the churches, on the whole, are in a prosperous state. All the congregations are supplied with ministers; the ministers are zealously employed in the duties of their office; the people respect and attend the public ordinances; and although there are some just causes of humiliation and complaint, yet there are far more causes of gratitude and praise.

In order to preserve your present prosperity, and to promote your future edification, permit us to remind you of the importance of the principles, the practices, and even the peculiarities of your

churches, and to recommend each to your particular attention.

RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLE is of the utmost importance to our churches; the very being of them depends on it; for as they are not supported by the state for any temporal purposes, they cannot long subsist without it; or, if they do subsist awhile, they are unanimated carcases, they have *a name that they live, and are dead.*

God is an infinite spirit, an object of contemplation, but not of vision. The invisible excellence of God is displayed in all the works of nature, and in all the ways of Providence; and just and proper *notions* of his perfections, including the *virtues,* that are necessarily connected with the relation of those perfections to us, form that system of natural religion, which St. Paul calls *the truth of God,* and which, for its utility as far as it goes, should be inculcated among christians.

Christianity elucidates and confirms the truths of natural religion, and it also reveals other facts, which the highest human penetration could never have discovered. Of this kind are the introduction, the extent, and the penalty of moral evil; the plan of redemption; the person of the redeemer; and the present and future state and felicity of the redeemed. Christianity collects the divine glories into a point in the person and offices of Christ, displaying a brightness so striking as to fix and affect every beholder; and at the same time cooling and softening the object so as to render it at once the

most magnificent and the most condescending, the most formidable, and the most amiable object in all the compass of contemplative thought. Here God appears supremely terrible to sin, and supremely good to the sinner. In punishing our substitute he sits the inflexible judge surrounded with all the terrible pomp of Omnipotence; and in pardoning the principals, he displays a love beyond the softest compassion of the tenderest parent.

The knowledge and belief of these articles produce in the heart a disposition to universal holiness, which expresseth itself in a pious conformity to natural obligations, and to the positive institutes of religion; in a benevolent discharge of every social duty to our fellow creatures; and in a regular veneration for ourselves. The good man views his high and *holy calling*, and rises superior to the slavery of sin.

Every idea, that operates in this manner, is a *religious principle;* and miserable is the state of those who are destitute of it. An unprincipled mind is an easy prey to every vice. Some individuals, void of the knowledge of *the miserable moral state of man*, are full of pride and presumption: others destitute of faith in the atonement are involved in distress and despair; while others are rioting in the excesses of this life, and violating every divine command to gratify their senses and their passions, through their fatal ignorance of *a blessed immortality*. If whole societies retain the ceremonies of religion, after they have lost their

faith and knowledge, they resemble a dead carcase placed in a living attitude, and wrapped in a gaudy shroud.

If, therefore, brethren, you value your own happiness, or that of your children, and families, and friends, and, above all, that of the church, to which you belong, you must inculcate *religious principle;* you must point to the *teacher sent from God,* and say to those around you, *this is* God's *beloved son, hear him.*

This leads us to the second article, the importance of performing THE PRACTICES of your churches. Beside the general practice of every moral virtue, and of every christian grace, you will, we dare say, pay a particular attention to those practices, which seminate the principles of religion in a congregation.

Make conscience of a regular attendance on public worship, as often as the church meets for this purpose. Attend diligently with your families, to the word preached by your pastors; it is *the power of God to salvation.* Be present in your places before the worship begins; avoid dissipation and indolence while it continues; stay till the whole is finished, and then meditate on it in retirement, turn it into prayer, or converse with one another on what you have heard. The last part of divine service is a fine expressive significant part of it. The minister, who is *the ambassador of Christ,* spreads holy hands over you, and *prays* on your part that *the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the*

Holy Ghost, MAY BE, and *declares* on God's part that his parental regard IS *with you all,* to which you cannot but say, Amen. Public worship among you receives no solemnity from architecture, instrumental music, history paintings, and peculiar vestments; but its simplicity gives it a far superior solemnity, when it is performed with *reverence and godly fear.* John Baptist was a plain homely man; but *Herod feared him, knowing that he was a just man, and an holy.*

Keep up family religion, the reading of the holy scriptures, singing, and prayer, or the last at least. A little forecast will gain you time for this twice a day, and study to make it short and agreeable, that it may not disgust, but edify your families.

Catechise your children and servants; either by requiring them to repeat by heart four or five questions and answers in printed catechisms to you once a week, and by familiarly explaining them to them; or by requiring them to repeat to you by heart one verse of scripture every day, from which you may derive several familiar questions, and lead them by this mean into a habit of thinking, reflecting, and reasoning on the great truths of religion. How happy will you be to see *the good seed bring forth in one* child *thirty, in another sixty, in another a hundred fold!* How happy in your dying agonies to be able to say to a pious son, *I go the way of all the earth: but thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do!* You should pay the greater attention to this

branch of family religion, in order to wipe off that foul scandal, which some zealots have cast on us for not sprinkling our infants, as if we were careless about their salvation, because we omitted a superstitious custom.

Maintain private social meetings, for singing, prayer, and christian conference. Habituate yourselves to *weep with them that weep, to rejoice with them that rejoice, to bear one another's burdens, and so to fulfil the law of Christ.*

Endeavour to promote one another's temporal interest. Deal with one another; employ one another; intermarry together; give one another advice and assistance; consider your whole species as your brethren; but regard your own community as your family.

Finally. *Be patient, prudent, and tender to one anothers infirmities.* Conceal them from the world; let the too common practice of whispering them among yourselves sink into disuse; pity and pray for the weak, *exhort them by the meekness and gentleness of Christ,* to take heed to their ways; but by no means exasperate them. Time and patience have done wonders in recovering backsliders, while contrary dispositions, productive of violent measures, have been attended with scandalous effects. Pay a particular attention in the choice of your officers, to men of a soft, healing spirit; they are unspeakable blessings to a christian church; and of them learn to exercise that *meekness of wisdom,* which an apostle recommends.

Lastly. Brethren, allow us to recommend to you an attention to THE PECULIARITIES of your churches. You hold some truths, which moral philosophers teach; some, that the Greek church, and the church of Rome hold; some, which other Protestant churches maintain; and others that are peculiar to yourselves. Do not neglect to inculcate those truths, which others hold; if *many* teachers *do virtuously*, labour ye to *excel them all.* But particularly enforce the truths, that are peculiar to your own societies, and for the sake of which you have separated from your brethren. Support the right of private judgment, and liberty of conscience in opposition to all human authority in matters of religion; the acknowledgment of Christ alone as the head of the church; and the sufficiency of the holy scriptures as the rule of faith and practice. These general truths include the frame and constitution of your churches; the nature and number of your offices; the mode of divine worship; the rites, ceremonies, or positive institutes of religion; the terms of admission to the ministry and to church-membership; the free choice of your ministers; and the nature of your discipline. With the knowledge of these truths providence hath entrusted you; may it be your holy ambition to say, when you give up your accounts, *Lord! thou deliveredst unto* us *five talents, behold we have gained besides them five talents more!*

The principles, that distinguish our churches, are but very little known to the bulk of our coun-

trymen; some condemn them without examination; others view them through false mediums; and, what is worse than all, many, who act upon them do but half understand them, and cannot at all defend them. The Lord make you *spiritual men, judging all things!* and able to *give a reason for the hope that is in you!*

There is nothing in our principles destructive of the peace of civil society; nothing hostile to government; we have no dissertation in scripture on the best form of government, whether it be monarchical or republican; we hold nothing injurious to any religious association; we distinguish between *the constitution* of a church and *the members*, who compose it, and we venerate the last for acting up to their best knowledge, while we reprobate the first as unscriptural in its frame, unsociable and violent in its temper, and unfriendly to the growth of religious knowledge, primitive morality, a chaste faith, and an universal love. If others, after all we have said, will not make these distinctions, we have only to say, *He, that is unjust, let him be unjust still.* Be you diligent, brethren! to impart clear notions of these articles to your children, and not only labour to make them christians, but strive also to form them wise, conscientious, and peaceable protestant dissenters, ornaments to our churches, and comforts to yourselves.

Be not unmindful, brethren, of the support of your societies. Your pastors ask no emoluments; your churches have none to bestow. Conscience

makes us your ministers; and it is to your credit, as well as to our comfort, to enable us to *provide things honest in the sight of all men.* Your voluntary tithes are our support; and your free contributions the support of your places of worship, and the relief of your poor. To enable you to discharge these duties, you must avoid the fashionable vices, and the expensive luxuries of the times; you must strive to excel in your several professions; you must be industrious in getting, and frugal in using the blessings of providence; you must commend yourselves to your fellow citizens by ingenuity, integrity, punctuality, humanity, affability, sympathy, hospitality; in a word, by uniting in your own persons the decency of the man with the dignity of the christian.

Virtue will not fail of its reward in your churches. You may perhaps gain nothing of this world by the practice of it; but you will acquire that affection and esteem of your brethren, and that reputation in the house of God, which you will value beyond all riches; and you may ever contemplate that most transporting of all periods, in which the arbiter of all will say to you in the hearing of all, and with the consent of all, *Well done good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord.*

And now, brethren! *we commend you to God, and to the word of his grace.* We bear you on our hearts before the Lord, and you will, we doubt not, *pray for us. The Lord make* every one, who comes into your societies, *like Rachel and like*

Leah; may each *build the house of Israel, do worthily in* his country, *and be famous in* his church! may each church be *an habitation of God through the spirit;* like *the house of Obed-edom, may it be blessed for the ark's-sake!*

Signed by order of the Assembly,
By the Moderator,

ROBERT ROBINSON.

Hemel Hempstead, Herts. May 14, 1776.

TUESDAY evening, 6 o'clock. Ministers, messengers, and members of the churches in this association, and members of other churches, met at the meeting-house. Tne Rev. Mr. Blaine began in prayer. The Rev. Mr. Robinson was chosen Moderator. Mr. Nash was chosen secretary. The secretary read the letters from the churches. Memoranda were taken. A petition from the church at Hertford for recommendation to collect for a meeting-house was read, approved by the assembly, and by their order signed by the Moderator. The general state of the churches was discussed. The Moderator was desired to draw up the circular letter. The Moderator concluded in prayer, at 9 o'clock.

Wednesday morning, 6 o'clock. The same assembly met again. The Rev. Mr. Jones prayed. Several resolutions passed relative to the better government of this association, which are to be transmitted to the churches. Several questions discussed relative to the best mode of catechizing children; the seminating of religious principles; the discharging of the several offices of the churches, &c. &c. The moderator read his plan of the circular letter, which being approved, he closed the assembly by prayer at 9 o'clock.

Half past 10 o'clock. The public meeting was opened by the Moderator, by singing the 1st, 2d, and 8th verses of the lxxxth psalm.

The Rev. Mr. Sleap prayed.

The Moderator gave out the two first verses of the cxxxiv hymn, first book.

The Rev. Mr. Gould prayed, and preached from 1 Sam. iv. 13. *Lo! Eli sat upon a seat by the way side, watching; for his heart trembled for the ark of God.*

The Moderator gave out five verses of the cxxxii psalm.

The Rev. Mr. Geard prayed.

The Moderator gave out the 3d and 4th verses of the xcv paslm.

The Rev. Mr. Walker preached from 1 Thess. v. 17. *Pray without ceasing.*

The Moderator concluded in prayer, and dismissed the assembly.

At 6 in the evening. The Moderator preached from 1 Tim. i. 15. *Worthy of all acceptation.*

The Rev. Mr. Baskerville prayed.

The Moderator dismissed the assembly with the usual benediction, and gave notice that the next association would be held at Cambridge, on the Tuesday and Wednesday in the week beforeWhitsuntide, 1777. The Rev. Messrs. Morris, and Jones, are appointed to preach. The services to begin at 5 o'clock on Tuesday evening; at 6 on Wednesday morning; at half past 10 in the forenoon; and at 6 in the evening.

FINIS.

AN

ESSAY

ON

LIBERALITY OF SENTIMENT:

PUBLISHED

WITH SOME MUTILATION

IN THE

FIRST NUMBER OF THE

THEOLOGICAL MAGAZINE,

By the Rev. C. DECOETLOGON. A. M.

1784.

AN ESSAY, &c.

BOOKS, like men, have a temper, and books of this kind should be good tempered; they then conciliate esteem, and like a well bred man give no offence; perhaps always communicate pleasure. It was said of our bloody queen Mary, that she was a good tempered lady of an ill tempered religion. Pity, any one should discover sour morose tempers, who profess a religion all founded and finished in love! I wish, for the sake of justice as well as general utility, this publication may always exemplify LIBERALITY OF SENTIMENT.

By sentiment I mean *opinion*, and particularly *religious* opinion; the notion, idea, or judgment we form of the body of religion in the whole, or any of the parts that compose it. By *liberality* I mean *generosity*, which, strictly speaking, rather accompanies sentiment than goes into the nature and essence of it. It would be speaking more accurately to say, such a man is a person whose religious sentiments are accompanied with a liberality and generosity of heart towards others who do not adopt his sentiments, than to say in a vague manner, such a person is of liberal sentiments. This is too general, and I will explain myself.

A man of liberal sentiments must be distinguished from him who hath *no religious sentiments at*

all. Nothing is more common than to meet with people, who have never turned their attention to religion. Whether it be owing to the natural littleness of the mind, or to the neglect of education, or to the gratifying of our passions, to the company we keep, the occupations we follow, or the vain prospects of future enjoyments in life, or to any other cause, the fact is too well established. The archbishop of Cambray somewhere resembles such a person to a man in distress for money, who would go into a room, receive, and reckon, and enjoy a large sum, without being able to tell, after he came out, any thing about the dimensions or the decorations of the room. The money, the money, the object of all his hopes and fears, had filled all the capacity of his little soul. So many men enter into the world and quit it. Let them rather blush for not being able to tell whether there be a God, or whether he have spoken, or what he hath said to mankind.

The man I mean to commend is the man of *sentiment.* He hath seriously and effectually investigated, both in his Bible and on his knees, in public assemblies and in private conversations, the important articles of religion. He hath laid down principles, he hath inferred consequences; in a word, he hath adopted sentiments of his own.

Nor let us confound the man of liberal sentiments with that tame, undiscerning domestic among good people, who, though he has sentiments of his own, yet has not judgment to estimate the worth and value of one sentiment beyond another. Two truths equally

clear may not be of equal dignity and importance. Can the posture in which I address God, suppose it scriptural, be as important as the temper in which I pray to him? People of this class divide into two parts, the one have no essentials, and the other no circumstantials in religion. The man, who would conceal this ignorance and indifference under pretence of liberality of sentiment, resembles Solomon's ideot, and says, "one event happeneth to the clean and to the unclean: as is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath."

Out of the hive of those, who have no circumstantials, the objects of toleration in religion, come a third class, who indeed have sentiments, and just sentiments, but who hold them in the unrighteous dispositions of censure, slander, and persecution. Morose and fierce as a stormy winter day, their aspect lours, and all their efforts damage the humble traveller, whose rusty cloak seems to him a nobler gift of God than all the mighty powers that endanger his comfort and his life. A generous soul will not only abstain from injuring the innocent, plundering the widow, and pillaging the orphan; but, to use a fine expression of a prophet, he will *despise* the gain of oppression, *shake his hands* from holding of bribes, *stop his ears* from hearing of blood, and *shut his eyes* from seeing evil.

What can a fierce believer reply to a modest christian uttering such a soliloquy as this? You

have a fine genius; but you persecute me! You are found in the faith; but your faith or your something works hatred to me! You are an eloquent orator; but you slander me! You sing with harmony, and pray with energy; but you increase your felicity by crucifying me? Think seriously, would the King of kings, your Lord and mine, the pattern of every good work, would he treat me thus? and would you wish he should conduct himself to you, as you do to me? The man of liberal sentiments is supposed to be of the sentiments of Jesus Christ; and in Jesus Christ there are two admirable perfections, the one extensive power, the other the kindest and most gentle use of it.

We should extend this subject to an improper length, were we to describe the exercise of liberality of sentiment, and to enforce it by arguments. A sketch, then, shall serve.

A generous believer of the christian religion, in whole or in part, will never allow himself to try to propagate his sentiments by the commission of sin. No collusion, no bitterness, no wrath, no undue influence of any kind, will he apply to make his sentiments receiveable; and no living thing will be less happy for his being a christian. He will exercise his liberality by allowing those who differ from him as much virtue and integrity as he possibly can. He will say, have I read the scriptures? so have they. Have I set God always before me? so have they. Do I act up to my best light? so do they. Are they fallible? so am I. Have they prejudices and passions? so have I. Have we both one

master, and are we fellow-servants; and must we all give an account to the Judge of the world, of the deeds done in the body? the wisest and the best way then is, to render the present life happy by agreeing where we can, and, where we cannot, by agreeing to differ.

There are, among a multitude of arguments to enforce such a disposition, the following worth our attention.

First: We should exercise liberality in union with sentiment, because of the different *capacities*, *advantages*, and *tasks* of mankind. Religion employs the *capacities* of mankind, just as the air employs their lungs and their organs of speech. The fancy of one is lively, of another dull. The judgment of one is elastic, of another, feeble, a damaged spring. The memory of one is retentive, that of another is treacherous as the wind. The passions of this man are lofty, vigorous, rapid; those of that man crawl, and hum and buz, and when on wing, sail only round the circumference of a tulip. Is it conceivable that capability so different in every thing else should be all alike in religion?—The *advantages* of mankind differ. How should he, who hath no parents, no books, no tutor, no companions, equal him whom providence hath gratified with them all; who, when he looks over the treasures of his own knowledge, can say, this I had of a Greek, that I learned of a Roman; this information I acquired of my tutor, that was a present of my father; a friend gave me this

branch of knowledge, an acquaintance bequeathed me that?—The *tasks* of mankind differ, so I call the employments and exercises of life. In my opinion, circumstances make great men; and if we have not Cæsars in the state, and Pauls in the church, it is because neither church nor state are in the circumstances in which they were in the days of those great men. Push a dull man into a river, and endanger his life, and suddenly he will discover invention, and make efforts beyond himself. The world is a fine school of instruction. Poverty, sickness, pain, loss of children, treachery of friends, malice of enemies, and a thousand other things, drive the man of sentiment to his bible, and, so to speak, bring him home to a repast with his benefactor, GOD. Is it conceivable that he, whose young and tender heart is yet all unpractised in trials of this kind, can have ascertained and tasted so many religious truths as the sufferer has?

Secondly: we should exercise liberality along with our sentiments, because of the *depravities* as well as imperfections of mankind. The patrons of error and vice have known mankind too well to hazard the cause of sin undisguised and in its native form. Is there a crime without an apologist, or one disgraceful action without a specious name? Is immorality any thing more than fashion? is not deism genius, and blasphemy spirit and courage? O the goodly pretences of error, the plausible pretexts of sin! How should a youth born in the lap of error, nourished and cherished with her milk, surrounded with people all in error like

himself, where every thing is in disguise, how should he, if his heart be depraved, how should he resist a magic so full of charms! Depraved mankind! instead of persecuting you for embracing only five out of five thousand truths of religion, I will pity and esteem you, and adore the grace that emboldens you to admit the five: "you may be saved, yet so as by fire." Had I, depraved like you, perhaps more than you, had I been so powerfully attacked by error, I might not have been saved at all.

We should believe the christian religion with liberality, in the third place, because *every part of the christian religion inculcates generosity.* Christianity gives us a character of God, but, my God! what a character does it give! GOD IS LOVE. Christianity teaches the doctrine of providence; but what a providence! *Upon whom doth not its light arise!* Is there an animalcule so little, or a wretch so forlorn, as to be forsaken and forgotten of his God? Christianity teaches the doctrine of redemption; but the redemption of whom? Of all tongues, kindred, nations, and people; of the infant of a span, and the sinner of a hundred years old: a redemption generous in its principle, generous in its price, generous in its effects, fixed sentiments of divine munificence, and revealed with a liberality, for which we have no name. In a word, the illiberal christian always acts contrary to the spirit of his religion; the liberal man alone thoroughly understands it.

Fourthly: We should be liberal, because no other spirit is *exemplified* in the infallible guides, whom we profess to follow. I set one Paul against a whole army of uninspired men: "Some preach Christ of good will, and some of envy and strife. What then? Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoice, yea and will rejoice. One eateth all things, another eateth herbs; but why dost THOU judge thy brother? We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ." We often inquire, what was the doctrine of Christ, and what was the practice of Christ: suppose we were to institute a third question, of what TEMPER was Christ?

Once more: We should be liberal as well as orthodox, because truth, especially the truths of christianity, *do not want any support* from our illiberality. Let the little bee guard its little honey with its little sting; perhaps its little life may depend a little while on that little nourishment. Let the fierce bull shake his head, and nod his horn, and threaten his enemy, who seeks to eat his flesh, and wear his coat, and live by his death: poor fellow! his life is in danger; I forgive his bellowing and his rage. But the christian religion, is that in danger? and what human efforts can render that true which is false, that odious which is lovely? Christianity is in no danger, and therefore it gives its professor life, and breath, and all things, except a power of injuring others. They, who have such powers, and have incorporated them with christianity, have derived them from some other cause, for the *wisdom that is from*

above is pure, peaceable, gentle, firm as a rock, and, so to speak, defies the unavailing rage of surrounding waves.

In fine: Liberality in the profession of religion is a *wise and innocent policy.* The bigot lives at home; a reptile he crawled into existence, and there in his hole he lurks a reptile still. A generous christian goes out of his own party, associates with others, and gains improvement by all. The pride of some christians is so great, that they cannot conceive there should be any thing true, which they do not understand, or any thing excellent which they do not possess. They cannot bear contradiction, and, conceiving themselves as models of religion, they judge of the perfection of others by the proportion they bear to themselves. So near me, so near orthodoxy: so much like me, so much like what a man ought to be: so many features of me, so much the resemblance of Jesus Christ. *O heart of man! deceitful above all things and desperately wicked! who can know thee?* It is a Persian proverb, *A liberal hand is better than a strong arm.* The dignity of christianity is better supported by acts of liberality, than by accuracy of reasoning: but when both go together, when a man of sentiment can clearly state, and ably defend his religious principles, and when his heart is as generous as his principles are inflexible, he possesses strength and beauty in an eminent degree. May God of his infinite mercy diffuse a rich abundance of his spirit among all good men.

FINIS.

LETTERS,

IN PART COLLECTED,

FROM

DIFFERENT PUBLICATIONS:

AND

IN PART PRINTED,

FROM THE

ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS.

LETTERS.

To the Rev. Mr. Lindsey.

[With a Copy of, " A Plea for the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ."]

1776.

FORGIVE a stranger to your person but an admirer of your virtue, for intruding into your presence. Your liberal sentiments on religious liberty, and your voluntary resignation of emoluments for conscience sake, have obtained you, sir, and will continue to obtain you, the esteem of all good men, who are not blinded by prejudice and party. If instances so rare be treated with contempt by a degenerate age, present peace, and future prospects, will more than compensate the sufferers. The same conscientious regard to truth, which has induced you to object to the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ in print, has induced me to attempt a defence of it, however unequal to the service. Your virtue, sir, has given your arguments consideration, and it seemed to me impracticable to consider the arguments without naming the person. For this reason, I beg your acceptance of a pamphlet, which the bookseller has orders to deliver; and let me bespeak your forgiveness, sir, if any word unfriendly to your person, character, or integrity, has fallen from the author. May he who seeth not as man seeth, pity our frailty,

accept our services; and what we know not, may he teach us! With the most ardent wishes for your present, and future felicity, I beg leave to subscribe myself, reverend sir,

Your Affectionate
R. Robinson.*

To the Rev. Mr. Jebb.

[With a Copy of, "A Plea for the Divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ.]

February, 5, 1776.

Give me leave to thank you for the present of your late publication. The generous principles of the author will increase the esteem of all good men for him. On the coming out of that piece, which attacked a doctrine that many of the author's admirers conscientiously held, I found some retaining the doctrine, and condemning its opponent, and others questioning the truth of the doc-

* To this letter Mr. Lindsey returned the following answer.

REVEREND SIR,

I take an early opportunity of acknowledging a very obliging letter received yesterday, which was followed to-day by a present of your book, for which I thank you; and, before I read it, throughout, will venture to pronounce, that one whose heart could dictate the letter you have favoured me with, can never say any thing in the defence of his own sentiments, that I, or any one, ought to be displeased with. That inquisitive and ingenious men should continue to differ so widely on such a subject, is a continual call, sir, to that candour and moderation towards each other, of which you are so studious to set the example. I am, sir, with very sincere respect,

Your Affectionate Humble Servant,

T. Lindsey.

trine in compliance to the acknowledged merit of its opponent. I thought both sides wrong; and supposed it my duty to shew both parties reasons for retaining the doctrine, and venerating the man who denied it. The pamphlet that accompanies this, and which begs your acceptance, contains these reasons. How forcible, each must judge. As the argument obliged me to mention you by name, I brought the manuscript to town before it went to press, to shew you, in order to your striking out any thing relating to yourself, which might appear unfriendly; unhappily, you were gone that morning to London. If any thing in the piece should appear unkind, believe me, sir, it has slidden in unawares. I had, I still have, the highest opinion of the learning, candour and virtue of Mr. Jebb; and I am sure he understands the nature of religious liberty, and the rights of conscience so perfectly, that he expects no apology for a candid opposition to his sentiments. You will allow me to say, what many would startle at, it is not impossible, that our sentiments, much as they seem to differ, may after all differ less than they appear to do. I look forward to that day when in a better world we shall see eye to eye: and with the most profound veneration, I remain,

Reverend Sir,

Yours most respectfully,

R. Robinson.*

* To this letter Mr. Jebb returned the following answer.

DEAR SIR, *Cambridge, Feb. 7, 1776.*

I return you my hearty acknowledgements for your pam-

To a Young Minister, who applied to Mr. R. for advice relative to his settlement.

1783.

WELL, my dear sir, and what must I say in answer to the question you do me the honor to lay before me? Should I consult my *judgment*, I should say nothing; because I know the difficulty and danger of giving advice on a whole subject at a distance, without hearing both sides of it: but should I consult my *heart*, full of the purest esteem for you, I should never be silent, when you desired me to speak.

I have the honor of knowing the church at···· ····and every thing I know of them is to their honor. I could be diffusive on this subject; but I forbear, and I mention this only as a fact, from which I shall infer something toward the close of this letter.

phlet, and the friendly letter with which it was accompanied. Although I must confess, that my opinion regarding the main point of doctrine, which is the subject of our consideration, remains the same, I yet can say with truth, that I read your essay with pleasure, and received, in many particulars, information and improvement from the perusal. Your truly christian temper in the discussion of so interesting a question, together with your generous sentiments respecting religious liberty, I cannot sufficiently admire; and I thank you very sincerely for the obliging manner in which you speak of myself. I am, with great esteem and every good wish,

Affectionately Yours,

JOHN JEBB.

I own freely, *unanimity* of votes in a christian church, especially in the choice of a minister, is an object of the constant wish of my heart; and in general, I think, it is necessary to the comfort both of the church and the candidate: perhaps it is always so in country towns, where the minority can have only the choice of sitting under a minister they do not approve, living without public worship at all, or forming a new society to their own satisfaction. Besides, there is something very flattering to a young minister in a unanimous call to a pastoral settlement; for it is generally supposed to stamp his character for his ability and acceptance; though it is certain, a congregation may be unanimous in the choice of an erroneous or incompetent man. *Mere* unanimity, therefore, proves no more in a christian church, than it does in any other society.

Hence I infer, that, desirable as unanimity is, it is *not always to be expected* in such a case as yours. The opinions, the experiences, the connections, the tempers, and, if you will allow the term, the sympathies, of good men, are so surprisingly diversified, that, from causes both guilty and innocent, there may, and will arise, in our present imperfect state, a great dissimilitude of opinion, and this will be the greatest in the largest churches.

Happy church! to have so many members present in these days of degeneracy at a *church-meeting;* happier still, that all these members agree in the great and principal articles of *religion:* there is no difference of opinion concerning the God they adore, the worship they should offer to him, the

truth that should be taught, the ordinances that should be administered ; but they differ only concerning a temporary officer, whose *days are as an hand breadth,* and whose duration is as nothing before God !

Were I a member of this church, and might I be allowed the liberty of addressing them, I would say, " Brethren, is it likely, should we dismiss the pre- " sent candidate, that we should be *unanimous* in " another? Can any one present *propose* one " likely to render himself acceptable to all ? Are " you all disinterested, and do you think it will " promote the *public* good to discharge the pre- " sent teacher ? Have you duly weighed the doc- " trine of *growth in grace,* and have you conclu- " ded that this youth will be every day improving, " and consequently approaching nearer to your " views of the gospel ? Have you recollected, " that a pastor in our churches is not settled in " fee-simple for life at his ordination, but always " remains *removable* by vote ? Can you promise " yourselves unanimity always in future in *any* " *other church ;* and is it worth while at *your* time " of life to try ? Is it not at least worth trying " by your continuance with us, whether *time,* " which is every day altering men and things, may " not so operate as to bring us nearer in opinion ? " What would *you* in our case, having so large a " majority, do ? Propose a plan in which we can " all agree, or, if you cannot do that, exercise a " momentary *patience* and compassion towards " us, your mistaken brethren."

I must suppose, from the well-known wisdom and temper of the church, that more and better things have been said to conciliate the brethren. I am sorry that after all there is not an unanimity.

But, say you, what would you do in my case? To say I do not know, would be absurd; for were I in your case, I should be obliged to do something; either to stay and accept the call, or to refuse it and depart.

In this case, being necessitated to do something in an affair, on which providence had not thought fit to give me *demonstration*, I would do the next best thing; that is, I would regulate my conduct by *probability;* and I would first of all enquire whether the church was *constituted* on a principle of government by an *unanimous* vote, and then I would refuse the call, because it would not be constitutional: but if the church were governed by a majority of votes, I should think there was nothing unconstitutional and singular in my being invited by a majority only.

Secondly: I would examine the *proportion* of the majority in regard to the minority. If the numbers be as you say, 13 against 58, the probability lies in favour of what the 58 vote for.

To this I would add, *Thirdly:* As close and critical an examination as I could make, without being rude and officious, into the *nature* and *value* of the votes: for it is not impossible that the majority may act from improper motives, and in that case, though the majority would have the weight in ap-

pearance and numbers, yet in the sight of God, who weighs the actions of men in a just balance, along with the motives from which they proceed, the weight of wisdom and virtue would be on the side of the minority. On the other hand, should the minority be found to act from wrong motives, which by the way should not even be supposed without the fuliest demonstration, I should not hesitate a moment to accept the call.

FOURTHLY: If it should appear, that both sides act sincerely, but one side from *mistake*, I should not think myself obliged to regulate my conduct by the errors of any number of my brethren, however sincere they might be in professing them.

Finally : I would endeavour, as you say you do, " to follow the leadings of divine *providence*, and " to use every prudent means to know what they " are." Now, how are you to know this? Not by miracle, certainly. In my opinion the shortest rule of knowing the mind of God in any step in providence, is, that which is taken from the great leading principle, the end of all our appointments here. To that station, most certainly, God may be said to call every man, in which it is probable he will *do most good ;* that is, (witness the merchant who freights a ship, and the minister, who preaches a sermon, both on probability of success, but not on demonstration ;) then I would act as, all things considered, it appeared to me probable that I should succeed in doing most good: that is, in your case, I think I would accept the invitation of

the church: however I would do so with several cautions.

First: I would examine as disinterestedly as I could, *all the objections* made against my ministry by the minority. It is not impossible; for however able and willing you may be, you are a youth in the world, and an infant of short standing in religion. I say it is not impossible that some of their objections against you may be well-founded—objections of good sense and true piety, though not of patience and charity; I do not say of impoliteness, for complaisance in cases of conscience is a crime; and I commend the minority for not sacrificing their religious principles to good humour. Our opponents are oftentimes our best friends; for they tell us of faults, which others see, but are too civil to mention. Now, if I found their objections well grounded, and I would rigidly try myself, I would act ingenuously like a man and a christian, and *remove* those objections. Perhaps they may not lie against your *principles*, which you cannot alter, but against your *manner;* as, your language, your voice, your action, your want of action, your dress, and a thousand things beside, none of which are of any consequence, except they contribute to the public edification. I would not therefore hold any of these sacred; but alter them to answer the great end of the christian ministry, public edification.

Secondly: If, as I suspect, the minority complain of the want of savour, and *experience* in your manner of treating of the doctrines of grace, I would

use proper caution in this case also. I do not wonder that christians are jealous of the experimental part of religion; for doctrine without experience is a body without a soul. I do not think, however, that it is in your power, and what is more, I should not think it in the power of an apostle, to speak satisfactorily on this subject without a long course of regular trial of his own. Have you been driven to your wits-end by *straitness in all your gates;* by disappointments, perplexities, injuries, and the various difficulties of life? Have you had the wife of your bosom, *the desire of your eyes taken away with a stroke?* Have you been driven with a heart all broken and shattered with grief, to flee out of company to the *chambers of the gate*, weeping and saying, *O my son Absalom, Absalom, my son, my son!* Have you had *fightings without*, and *fears within;* terrors on every side, while all around you frowned and said, *There is no help for you in God?* Have *the sorrows of death and the pains of hell gat hold upon you?* Have you been *wearied with groaning*, made *your couch all day*, and your *bed all night swim with tears?* Has *the Lord sent from above, taken you, and drawn you out of many waters, made your feet like hinds' feet, and taught your hands to war, so that a bow of steel was broken by your arms?* Alas! These good people have perhaps gone through all these things; and you will go through them, as others have before you, and then you will feel the supports of religion; that is, you will have a fund of expe-

rience, and *weep with those that weep.* The preaching of this kind of experience is not in your power; and it is not fair to expect it from you. If a church require this of a youth, they may have it dry, and in theory; but if they desire to have it in all its savour and weight, they should choose an old, broken spirited, distressed man.

However, I would in your case do all I could to obtain a *heart-felt sense* of religion. I would acquaint myself well with the poor and afflicted part of Christ's flock, and my benevolence towards them should supply my want of experience.

Finally: I would avoid every thing towards the minority that looked like *suspicion* or *censure.* I would treat them with all possible esteem, and do them every kind office in my power. Remember, it is no sin in them not to admire you. They are the people of God, and have a full right to judge for themselves; and, who can tell? Perhaps providence may have merciful designs to them, to you, to the church at·····, perhaps to other churches, where they may be more wanted than with you. *The Lord hath his way in the whirlwind, and in the storm. His way is in the sea, his path in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known.*

After all, perhaps your danger may lie lurking where you least suspect it; I mean among the *majority.* Should their approbation make you vain; should their humility and deference for you make you aspire to play the priest, and domineer; should their hospitality make you a gossip, running from

house to house with eagerness to retail news, nonsense, and slander; should their liberality make you haughty, and pompous; should their seriousness make you play the hypocrite, a dealer in grimace; should their frailties make you peevish and ill-tempered; should their virtues make you censorious and cruel; should you take it into your head, from the often ill-timed applause of some, that you are A GREAT MAN; and in the faith of this, should leave off the study of the scriptures, private prayer, and personal religion; whatever you might think of yourself, I should think you a mere Jack-a-dandy, and no longer the unsophisticated.....

How I wish to see you here! Here, if you could spend a month or two, it might not hurt you. The Jewish Rabbi visited me the other day,and told me he had only four pupils in the university; and he should teach you here every morning hebrew, and every evening you should preach in some stable or barn.

I am really ashamed of this letter. I have not written such a one these twenty years, except in cases of law. Farewell. It is time to conclude:

> "Night's candles are burnt out; and jocund day
> "Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops."

I am,

Dear Sir,

Your's ever,

R. ROBINSON.

To Henry Keene, Esq. Walworth.

Chesterton, May 26, 1784.

Old Friend,

You love I should write folios: that depends upon circumstances, and if the thunder storm lasts, it will be so: but what a sad thing it is to be forced to write, when one has nothing to say? Well, you shall have an apology for not writing,—that is, a diary of one day.

Rose at three o'clock—crawled into the library—and met one who said, "Yet a little while is the light with you: walk while ye have the light—the night cometh, when no man can work—my father worketh hitherto, and I work."—Rang the great bell, and roused the girls to milking—went up to the farm, roused the horse-keeper—fed the horses while he was getting up—called the boy to suckle the calves, and clean out the cow-house—lighted the pipe, walked round the gardens to see what was wanting there—went up the paddock to see if the weanling calves were well—went down to the ferry, to see whether the boy had scooped and cleaned the boats—returned to the farm—examined the shoulders, heels, traces, chaff, and corn of eight horses going to plough—mended the acre staff—cut some thongs, whip-corded the boys' plough whips—pumped the troughs full—saw the hogs fed—examined the swill-tubs, and then the cellar—ordered a quarter of malt, for the hogs want

grains, and the men want beer—filled the pipe again, returned to the river, and bought a lighter of turf for dairy-fires, and another of sedge for ovens—hunted up the wheelbarrows, and set them a trundling—returned to the farm, called the men to breakfast, and cut the boys bread and cheese, and saw the wooden bottles filled—sent one plough to the three-roods, another to the three-half-acres, and so on—shut the gates, and the clock struck five—breakfasted—set two men to ditch the five roods—two more to chop sads, and spread about the land—two more to throw up muck in the yard —and three men and six women to weed wheat—set on the carpenter to repair cow-cribs, and set them up till winter—the wheeler to mend up the old carts, cart-ladders, rakes, &c. preparatory to hay-time and harvest—walked to the six-acres, found hogs in the grass—went back, and sent a man to hedge and thorn—sold the butcher a fat calf, and the suckler a lean one—the clock strikes nine — walked into barley-field — barleys fine, picked off a few tiles and stones, and cut a few thistles—the peas fine, but foul; the charlock must be topped—the tares doubtful; the fly seems to have taken them—prayed for rain, but could not see a cloud—came round to the wheat-field—wheats rather thin, but the finest colour in the world—sent four women on to the shortest wheats —ordered one man to weed the ridge of the long wheats—and two women to keep rank and file with him in the furrows—thistles many—blue-bottles no end—traversed all the wheat-field—came

to the fallow-field—the ditches have run croocked —set them straight—the flag-sads cut too much, rush-sads too little, strength wasted, shew the men how to three-corner them—laid out more work for the ditchers—went to the ploughs—set the foot a little higher, cut a wedge, set the coulter deeper, must go and get a new mould-board against to-morrow—went to the other plough—picked up some wool, and tyed over the traces—mended a horse-tree, tyed a thong to the plough-hammer—went to see which lands wanted ploughing first—sat down under a bush—wondered how any man could be so silly as to call me *reverend*—read two verses, and thought of his loving kindness in the midst of his temple—gave out, "Come all harmonious tongues," and set mount Ephraim tune—rose up—whistled—the dogs wagged their tails, and on we went—got home—dinner ready—filled the pipe—drank some milk—and fell asleep—woke by the carpenter for some slats, which the sawyer must cut—the Reverend Messrs. A. in a coat, B. in a gown of black, and C. in one of purple, came to drink tea, and to settle, whether Gomer was the father of the Celts and Gauls and Britons, or only the uncle—proof sheet from Mr. Archdeacon—corrected it—washed—dressed—went to meeting, and preached from, *the end of all things is at hand, be ye sober and watch unto prayer*—found a dear brother *reverence* there, who went home with me, and edified us all out of Solomon's song, with a dish of tripe out of Leviticus, and a golden candlestick out of Exodus.—Really

and truly we look for you and Mrs Keene and Mr. Dore at harvest; and if you do not come, I know what you all are.—Let Mr. Winch go where he can better himself. Is not this a folio? And like many other folios? .....

R. Robinson.

To the Rev. Daniel Turner, Abingdon.

Chesterton, June 22, 1784.

.....

What a short-lived thing is reverie! There sat I, in my own hall, in more than Indian regal rapture—over against me, my wife, making tea—on my right hand, the honourable Speaker of the American house of Congress—on my left, the great general Read, second to Washington, in the American army—next to him, an envoy from the states; and along with us a circle of friends, listening to the honied accents of their tongues, distilling with all the richest and most fragrant sounds of liberty, property, law, commerce, religion, and a future state of perfect and everlasting felicity;—when in came a well-known, grave, and lovely figure, and addressed me with, "My dear naughty boy!" Full of ideas of dignity, I said with Mungo in the Padlock, "Naughty boy! naughty yourself: old massa little tink how great I be!" Did I ever forget you? does a day ever pass without my remembering you? could not I sit at your feet to receive instruction?

..... Seriously, my American guests came on Saturday evening,—spent the Lord's day with us,—departed on Monday afternoon, and left me the choice of the cabin of the Washington, and as much land in the states as I would wish to accept. Happiest of countries! Peace and prosperity attend you! I shall never see you; but if I forget the ability and virtue, that struggled to obtain, and actually did obtain, all that mankind hold dear; let my right hand forget her cunning.

.....Pardon this. I return to your letter. My literary matters are at present in the field. I have twenty acres of grass to mow,—an hundred acres of corn to get in at harvest,—fifty acres of fallows ploughing,—ditching,—manuring, and preparing for the next wheat-crop,—beside cattle fat and lean to inspect. Guess, therefore, whether I can either journey or study, with any degree of prudence, till the fall of the year.

To the same.

Chesterton, Sep. 28, 1786.

Honoured Sir,

For once I shall have the pleasure of answering your favour directly. We deliver in all our books at every quarter-day*. I do not choose to send my large lot in the crowd, so mine went yesterday,

* Viz. To the public Library, Cambridge.

and your letter came back. To morrow my dockets are to be returned, and on Saturday I set off again with new ones. Meantime I strike out my next draft, which is Italy, and prepare for my winter campaign. I find, there are ample materials in the two sets of Muratori: the first is his *Rerum Italicasum Scriptores varii in unum collecti corpus*, contained in 28 volumes folio. The second is his *Antiquitates Italicæ Medii Ævi*, 6 volumes folio. I have made great use of these in my preliminary essays, and I saw then what they would do in my history. His *Thesaurus Inscriptionum*, 4 vols. folio, is useful, and so is his *Anecdota Ecclesiastica*, and his *Anecdota Græca*. He is an invaluable collector of authentic monuments. I have two ordinations to attend in October, one of a general baptist in St. Ives, Huntingdon; the other of a particular baptist at Biggleswade, Bedford. Then I go to supply one Lord's day a destitute neighbouring church, and I fear I must run up to town for a day or two with my youngest son, who is going in a trading vessel to Smyrna, just to see him aboard. I foresee no more winter interruptions.

The Russian church comes up three times in my plan. Once in the preliminaries, to authenticate the *fact* of their dipping, for trine immersion is, and ever was their practice. This is established from the old greek menologies collected by Izanphurnaris, Goar, Habert, and others: as also from their councils, comments, &c. Modern travellers ascertain the fact now, as Gordon, Dr.

King, and many more. The present empress is an anabaptist, or, to speak more properly, she was sprinkled in her infancy, when she was princess of Anhalt Zerbst, and dipt when she married the Czar Peter, and took the name of Catherine Alexiefna.

Russia comes up a second time in the history of Greece. I have divided this into three periods. The first is from the beginning to the removal of the seat of empire to Byzantium, during which, the church was not established, and the earlier Greek fathers flourished. Here is no shadow of infant-baptism. The second reaches from the erection of the eastern empire to its destruction by the Turks. This is properly the Byzantine history. The Byzantine history consists of 36 folios of the princess Anna Comnena, Zonaras, Glycas, Ducas, Acropolita, Cantacuzen, Arocopius, Bryennius, Cæsar, and others. There is in this library a magnificent set of these writers, and I have taken the history from them. Here the history of baptism divides itself. In the establishment there is dipping and infants; among the dissenters single and trine immersion, but no infants. I think I have proved contrary to the opinion of Dr. Priestley, that the Eunomians dipped, and dipped only adults. I think an anecdote in the Ανεκδοτα of Procopius puts it out of doubt. It is the history of a young officer, the son of an Eunomian, who conformed to the Greek church, in the reign of Justinian. The last period reaches from the conquest of Constantinople to the present time. Here, un

der the patriarchates, comes up Russia. Here is dipping (trine immersion) and infants.

Russia appears a third time in the history of Lithuania in Poland. This was a species of greeks called Rutheni, who coalesced with the catholics. Prince Ostrog, palatine of Kiow, who was of this kind of Greeks, patronised the unitarian baptists on his estates at Lubastow, Ostropolis, and other places, and actually built them a place of worship at Constantow; and in all these parts, and through Red Russia they flourished; and governor Gabriel Hoyski, lord Lieniuta, the sons of judge Czapliski, and many others, were of their churches, both patrons and members. Jerom of Prague, the Taborites and Calixtines of Bohemia, the disciples of Huss, from whom came the Moravian baptists, and the Transylvanian churches, who were the offspring of the Poles, had all some connections near or remote with the Greek church. Dipping was common to both parties, though the Bohemian baptists poured. My account of Poland, Transylvania, and Bohemia are all written. They must be revised, and they fall into the second volume. My sketch of Greece consists of about eighty pages of such paper as this letter. Perhaps I may throw in a few more; and perhaps I may scratch out, when I sit down seriously to revise for the press.

In regard to Signor Valdesso, I have seen his considerations in English. I do not think them of any great consequence, and I hope you will not give yourself much trouble about the original.

Hitherto I have made it a law to trust nothing but original authentic monuments, for I have observed some foul play in translations and quotations. I have Bayle. I have tucked Valdesso into Navarre, and if I find anything in Italian monuments, as probably I may, (and indeed I think I have met with him either in Muratori or Montfaucon) I shall put him in his proper place, *Naples.*

On overlooking the above, I fear I wrote it before I was well awake. The clock struck three, when I dipped the first pen. While my kettle boiled I wrote. Now that I have breakfasted, and have tasted "the nutritive aid of the beloved pipe," my brains are brightened, and I return to the charge, perceiving I had forgotten two things. First, Regenvolscius, I thank you for the information. He was of the *Unitas Fratrum.* His book is a small quarto, full of authentic information. I have made great use of him in Poland, to which, and to the greek-catholics of Lublin, his accounts chiefly belong. He was also of great use to me in Bohemia. He gives authentic lists of Taborite and Calixtine ministers, and throws great light on the disputes between archbishop Rokyzan, and Nicholas Peldrimouski. Thence came the Moravian baptists. Poplinerius, Stranski, Dubrauski, Æneas Sylvius, Toppeltinus, the acts of prince Racokski, Esterhazi, Isthuansi, and many more fall in well with Regenvolscius; but he contains more original information of that spot, in Lithuania, than they all. A more valuable book, and a far more scarce, is a small piece written by Lu-

bienieski. I had despaired of finding him, when, lo, a gentleman of Trinity-college found him in a blind corner of that library. I fear I shortened my lecture the night I got hold of him, through impatience to read him. Dubrouski I procured from Queen's-college library.

My next omission regards Italy. I spoke of Muratori. I ought to have said, that I had finished the first period, and that, instead of authentic history, I had been forced to prove that the Latin church had no authentic historians of their first period; but had filled up the chasm with legends of the ninth and tenth centuries. What parcels of martyrologies, menologies, metaphrastai or life writers, have I been forced to turn over! It pleases me to find, that even this generation of liars had not the courage to put infant-baptism into their histories of St. Agathas, St. Felicitates, and other such trash. On the contrary, baptisteries, adults, confessions of faith, and so on, appear every where. Nine volumes of Ughelli's *Italia Sacra*, three of Rocchi Pirri's *Sicilia Sacra*, four of Ripamonti's *Milan*, one of Bernard *de Rubei's de Ecclesia Aquileiensi*, and others of this sort, have been of great use to me. Adults and baptisteries without end. My best book here has been a modern work of Paciaudi, and his description of the cabinet of the late pope Benedict (XIV. I think) who was a mild, learned, curious antiquary. They laugh at such as pretend that baptism was administered by sprinkling for the first eight or ten centuries. Paul Maria Paciaudi published his *Christian an-*

tiquities at Rome under the auspices of Benedict XIV. in 1759. The pope assisted and inspected the work. He was a great lover of antiquities, and Paciaudi had access to seals, rings, coins, cups, vases, habits, monumental inscriptions, manuscripts, &c. all of the pope's private cabinet. Speaking of an antique mosaic work in the baptistery of Ravenna, in which the artist hath represented John pouring water on Jesus, he exclaims thus—"*Præcursor vasculo aquam in caput Christi effundit. At quæ* monstra *nuntiant ejusmodi emblemata! Numquid Christus Dominus* adspersione *baptizatus? Tantum abest a vero, ut nihil magis* vero *possit esse contrarium: sed errori et inscientiæ pictorum tribuendum, qui quum historiarum sæpe sint ignari, vel quia quidlibet audendi potestatem sibi factam credunt, res, quas effingunt, mirifice aliquando depravant.*" By a variety of ancient Etruscan monuments, taken from the *Museum Florentinum*, and other such works of Gorius, Kircher, Bonanni, Salvinii, and others, I think, I have demonstrated that infant-sprinkling is not christian baptism but pagan lustration, and was in use long before either Jesus or Moses, so that if they aspire at antiquity, here they have it:—an antiquity which we dippers do not boast of, or envy. I trouble you with all this for the sake of your advice on the propriety of my plan, the worth of my materials, and the names of authors, which may have escaped my notice, and fallen under yours. I sit before you as be-

fore my father, and I have not opened my matters to any but yourself in this ample manner. You may guess my reason · · · · · · · · ·

Muratori, then, belongs to the middle ages, during the kingdom of Italy, first under the Lombards, then under Charlemagne and his successors: including also the Exarchate of Ravenna. I know already that there was no sprinkling in Italy during this period. Baptisteries there were, and some yet remain. This is the inscription on one :

DOMINA NOSTRA FLAVIA THEVDOLINDA
AEDIFICARE FECIT HOC BAPTISTERIVM
VIVENTE DOMINO NOSTRO AGILVPHO.

Moreover, the Lombard laws prove that *infans* stood for a minor, an infant in *law*, not a *natural* infant, and so it did among all, Greeks, Romans, Goths, Franks, &c. The cause of infant baptism diminishes in proof every day in my eyes, and I am ever finding something, which seems as if it were written on purpose to produce this effect. I pitch foot with father Mabillon, and affirm it did not appear in the West till the fifth century; and that impudent debauchee, St. Augustine, who was baptised along with his bastard Alypius, by Ambrose at Milan, himself a middle aged man, and the boy about sixteen :—that Austin, who kept a mistress while he was preparing for baptism, and writing books to defend christianity,—that was the man, who invented original sin, and baptism to wash it away, and told a lie to support it by calling it an apostolical tradition,

when he, who was the son of a christian woman, had not been baptised in infancy himself. I look upon him to have been a true Carthaginian, and one of the best examples of Punic faith that ever lived.

To the Rev. Mr. Thomas, Leominster.

Reverend Sir,

About two or three years ago, a committee of our denomination in London desired me to collect materials for an history of the baptists. Mr. Thompson lent his papers, which I got transcribed; but when all put together, they are confined and unsatisfactory. I thought an history of the baptists might be traced through all the dark ages of popery; and last winter I addressed myself to the study, and made some progress in the history of foreign baptists; but, I confess freely to you, the greatness of the work discourages me, for I feel my incompetence. There is only one thing that induces me to persevere. I have access to the university-library, and I am the only one of our brethren who can come at one of the national repositories, where books on all subjects, and of every price, are to be inspected. I have had loads, and loads more I must have, if I finish the plan I have laid out. I find the Bohemian and Moravian baptists were many of them Arians, and some a sort of Quakers. The Polish baptists were Socinians,—

the Transylvanians something worse,—the English baptists, at the reformation, were Arminians,—but all of them, ancient and modern, were zealous defenders of the perfection of scripture, the rights of conscience against tyranny, both civil and sacred, and the absolute necessity of evangelical purity, according to their own ideas of it. I am strongly inclined to believe that the ancient Britons, who resisted Austin the monk, were baptists ; but of what kind, in regard to doctrine, I do not know. I hope to come to this part of the history, and, indeed, finish the whole this winter. I think, if I publish it, it will be only under the title of an Essay toward an History of the Baptists; and I think it will be comprised, with authorities for all we advance, in notes, in one volume, quarto.

I have been obliged to let your valuable papers lie till I arrive at that part of the history; and then I will return them with many thanks. I wish most heartily, before I conclude any thing about printing, that I could have the advantage of consulting you, concerning the plan itself, and the manner in which it is executed. Your wise hand would strike out foreign matter, and insert both arguments and ornaments, of which I am incapable. Providence denies me that advantage; and I hope, if ever I live to publish this work, that you will treat it, as you do every thing else, with the politeness of a gentleman and the candour of a Christian.

R. Robinson.

To the same.

Reverend Sir,

I perceive baptists are of all ages, and all countries, and connected with a variety of subjects, of which I had no notion, till I went heartily into the business. Absolutely we have no history, and we have suffered enemies to tell our tale. My collection will make about four thin quartoes. The first is an history of baptism; the last three contain an history of baptists. The first is divided into essays, and they again into sections. The whole is intended to contain an account of the rise, progress, connections, corruptions appendages, and reformation of baptism, and so on. The historical part begins with apostolical churches, goes through the several countries of Asia, Africa, and Europe, and ends with America. Our friends have said, "Print." I will not 'till I have taken the opinion of a few wise and good men, on the propriety of such a work. For this purpose, I have dipped promiscuously into the middle of the first volume, taken out two sheets, and struck off twenty or thirty copies, one of which begs your acceptance. The only question I take the liberty to ask, is, whether, as may be judged by such a specimen, a work of this kind is likely to serve the cause? If not, I have done. Happy should I be, if I could consult you, who have turned your attention so much that way.

R. Robinson.

To the Rev. T. Dunscombe, Bampton, Oxon.

Chesterton, Nov. 14, 1785.

Dear Sir,

I own it gives me a great deal of pleasure to see any of the ministers of our churches address themselves to honest employments in life; there are many reasons to induce us to do so. Idleness is abominable, and the pretence of study is a joke, where a man hath not more books than he can read over in a month. Besides, what is there to find out? A catholic had need be a subtle dog, and furnished with all the lore of the schools, to make the new Testament speak in favour of his church; but a baptist, whose whole religion lies in believing a few plain facts, and in imitating that very plain example, Jesus Christ,—what hath he to do to rack his invention, and to assemble all apologies, ancient and modern, to justify him for doing so? Oh! but there are some beautiful readings, and fine criticisms, and strokes of oratory, which deserve the study of a minister of Christ! Well, God forgive me, poor sinner that I am! I feel three pounds, gained honestly by the sale of a fat bullock, produce more fire in my spirit, than all those pretty, but poor tassels and spangles, can give me. With three pounds I can set fire to ten cold hearts frozen with infirmity and widowhood, poverty and fear. Half a guinea will purchase the native eloquence of a grateful old woman; and she, if I set

her to read, will give me a criticism of the heart, and the finest reading in the world. Oh! bless the old soul! what honied accents she pours into my ear! If I can honestly get, and afford to give away three pounds, it will always be my own fault, if I be not very happy. Now then set me to preach. How is it possible I should be dull! The luxury of living to the glory of God, and the good of society; the joy of having saved a forlorn and forgotten cripple from hanging herself in despair; the felicity of setting fire to incense that burns to the glory of God; these are preparations of the pulpit, which the cold consumer of midnight oil never derives from his accents and quantities. I was the other night in our vestry with several gownsmen just before the lecture. In comes one of my sister Abigails. "How do you do, Sarah? I am glad to see you returned safe from visiting your family at Soham."—"Bless the Lord, Sir, I am. We heard Mr. Watts on the Lord's day, and were very much edified indeed! But the day after we were coming out of town, my husband saw him—and poor creature, he was so shocked.—O Sir"!—Thunderstruck at all this, I trembled, expecting to hear before the gown, that my poor brother Watts was seen drunk, or some such thing. Lord, thought I, happy is that man who hath not a foolish, babbling good woman in his congregation. I looked pale. Sarah went on, "O Sir, there was the poor man on the top of a ladder a thatching a rick." I laughed, but stamped, and said, "Have I bestowed so much instruction upon you and your husband for nothing?

Are you yet in a state of infancy? I honour the man, and must be acquainted with him."—" Dear Sir, he works five days, and has only Saturday to study."—" Well, Sarah, I shall try to convince him, that he ought to work six days; for one day will never make him a scholar, and his people are only a set of turf-diggers : and fourteen pence more in his pocket every Lord's day, will make him preach with more vigour, and rattle the gospel with more power into the turf-men's souls. I appeal to these learned gentlemen." After all, the prejudices of the common people are very great against the secular employments of ministers; and while we pursue them, we should take care, and not give any unnecessary offence. This last seed-time I was in the field along with a young gentleman who looks after my farm, and he was digging a water-furrow across a land. It was a strong clayey soil, and he groaned, so that in pity I took the spade and went into the ditch, which was very dauby, and presently groaned too, at which he fell a laughing.—What do you laugh at? " Pardon me, Sir : I recollected that a minister lately said in his sermon, that preaching was the hardest work that was done under the sun." I wish the fool was in this ditch : he would soon learn that some of his authors had taught him to tell fibs. Farewell, my most affectionate friend ; industry, plenty, frugality, prosperity, generosity, and piety be with you. Amen.

To the same.

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IT is really deplorable to see the condition of some of our churches; some sapling of a minister collects and embodies weaklings, like himself; a sort of insipid chit-chat is made the test of a christian; and as men of sense will not disgrace their understandings by chaunting such stuff, they are left. Not one of these church babies foresees that in human societies, human frailties must produce disagreeables; not one, therefore, is prepared to meet such things, but in the moment of a difference void of all prudence, moderation, or decency, out they set a crying, scaring themselves, and bellowing up the multitude, as if the world were at an end; when nothing is the matter, only Billy the baby has broken Billy the baby's doll. It is impossible in the nature of things, that in our churches any thing can happen of consequence enough to justify such violent dealings as are often seen. Nobody's life is endangered here; nobody's property is disposed of without his consent; nobody is compelled to attend. In short, they are our unruly passions, that give church disputes all their consequence; and if they were bridled, no harm could happen. If a dispute is too much for contending parties, why do they not submit it to the arbitration of men cooler than themselves? I think nothing can excuse such monstrous conduct as posting up papers about church disputes, upon market crosses. Zeal, frantic zeal, what infinite mischief it does!

I have disposed of this summer, in repairing and painting my house, in receiving company, and in a month's retirement; and I have made one observation: I never had so much company successively, in so short a time in my life, and I have remarked only a few of the many ministers, who are sincerely studying the New Testament, the four gospels, I mean. I want a man who vindicates the book, and ascertains the fact, that the history of the incarnation is not an addition, and this by sober, just criticism. I do not want authorities of great names. I want reasons to convince my understanding. I want one who gives me the genuine doctrine of the four gospels, before the epistles were written; a man as familiar with Palestine, as his own country; with Herod, John, and others of that day, as with George III. and Pitt, and Fox. I do not want a quoter of texts, and a packer of ecclesiastical news. I want a good sound logician, who knows how to reason, and who is no novice,·····a cool, deliberate, honest disciple of Jesus, who pauses, and weighs, and admits the refining fire of inquiry to burn freely. Ah! my friend, what a falling off is here! Instead of possessing treasures of wisdom and knowledge, alas! we are asked one question, and we gape like dying rooks: and yet we are set for the defence of the gospel, and the Lord, even Jehovah himself, is wonderfully with us!—As for mere squirrels, that jump, and frisk, and crack nuts, they divert me, for in my eye their idiotism is the seal of their salvation. But I hate your Cat-o'-mountains that

hiss and scratch out harmless peoples' eyes. Brother, let us not be mischievous by our tempers ; let us not be Jack-no-bodies by our idleness, and inactivity. Let us begin to study at the feet of our quiet and mild master, and in patience let us, as he hath taught us, possess our souls. Peace be with you. Love to all, except Miss Dunscombe : here is not room enough to hold my expressions of esteem for her.

Yours ever,

R. Robinson.

To the Rev. Dr. Toulmin.

1787.

The last question in your favour of July 18th, " How your family is ?" requires an answer which you will accept as an apology for my silence. Alas! my heart is too full. I can only tell you we are now recovered, and returned to our usual labours. Three years the loveliest of all girls, the pride and the beauty of my family, was declining. In October she fell asleep, saying, as she reclined her head, Lord, into thy hands I commend my spirit. Seventeen years of age—five feet ten inches high—straight as a palm-tree, a fund of wit, an innocence of manners, and a piety and virtue regulated by wise and just sentiments of the great Supreme : all, all are fled, and here am I,—here,

As on a lonely building's top,
The sparrow tells her moan,
Far from the tents of joy and hope,
I set and grieve alone.

My dear sir, say nothing to me; I try to acquiesce. I comfort my wife, and the rest of my family, and in collecting for them, soothe myself; but this hath been a great wound; for all were most affectionately attached to the lovely Julia.—I have done.—I am a parent.—Forgive me.

To Mr. Marsom of London, acknowledging the receipt of two Pamphlets, the one Sykes on the Innocency of Error, *and the other—On the* Impersonality of the Holy Ghost, *written by Mr. Marsom.*

Chesterton, May 7, 1788.

I accept with gratitude both the pamphlets you were so complaisant as to send me, and I thank Mr. Taylor for this additional proof of his esteem.

Eleven years ago, I published a Preface to the third volume of a Translation of Saurin's Sermons on the Doctrine of Christian Liberty; and in page 7. I said, " Mere mental errors, if they be not en- " tirely innocent in the account of the Supreme " Governor of mankind, cannot be, however, " objects of blame and punishment among men." *Error* is mistake; *mental* error is mistake of the mind; *mere* mental error is such a mistake of the mind as doth not affect the heart and life. This harmless position exposed me to many censures, and by a certain class of men my name hath been cast out as evil ever since; they have thought it a duty to preach and print against me, and to treat

me with personal insults. About a year ago, I heard by a gentleman of Queen's college, that Sykes had published the same sentiment, and since that, I saw, in Dr. Disney's Life of Sykes, an account of it. Ever since I have endeavoured to procure the book, but never could till the week yours arrived. Three days before, I had seen it in a Lynn catalogue, and I instantly wrote and procured it, but it was the first edition. Next day, a fellow of Trinity college found a second edition, in the college-library, and lent it me. Then came yours, the last and best edition, for which I most sincerely thank you. People are so thoughtless as to exclaim—"If this "be allowed, the doors of our churches will be "thrown wide open to all erroneous persons." I deny the fact; for I can easier find professors of a speculative system, than men of a holy life; and unholy professors are the most grievous heretics. Who is to judge of error, you or I; you for me, or I for you, or each for himself? There is no safe ground of action, except the leaving of every individual to judge for himself, and account to his master. My thanks are due most sincerely for your own performance. I have read it with the most glowing affection for the author. I love a man who thinks for himself, think what he will. I honour the virtue of every one who dares to be free, and to shake off the petty tyranny of ecclesiastics, who bind the grievous burdens of tyrannical systems upon the consciences of another man's disciples — disciples whom they neither created,

nor redeemed, nor are appointed to judge. My soul come not thou into their intolerant assembly!

As to personality in God, a trinity of persons, I think it the most absurd of all absurdities; and in my opinion, a man who hath brought himself to believe the popular doctrine of the trinity, hath done all his work; for, after that, there can be nothing hard, nothing inevident, the more unintelligible, the more credible; and, as this serves the purpose of producing implicit faith in pretended guides, priests will always try to keep it in credit. The bible reads easy, if we consider God *one;* Jesus the *Son* of God; and the Holy Ghost, the *influence* of God. But this would spoil trade, the scriptures would become plain and easy, and a learned priesthood would be unnecessary to make out and unfold that hard science christianity, to us poor blind creatures. Verily, my friend, priestcraft is at the bottom of all this burlesque upon religion; for such I account the grimace of one man's pretending to take care of another man's soul. The direct end of all their schemes is to cheat people into a disuse of their own understandings, and to pitch their eyes, and place their affections, upon a frail, and often a wicked proxy.

I am sorry I had not the pleasure of knowing you when I was in London; at present I have no immediate business there, and if I had, my stay would be short; not because I have not innumerable friends there whom I esteem, but because my present avocation is here. Here I am far from the din of unprofitable disputes about words and phra-

ses. Here I enjoy a daily intercourse with men of the first literature, and the most amiable dispositions, sincere disciples of Jesus, who, thanks to Divine goodness, are in this university, studying the holy scriptures, and devoting their fine talents to the service of truth. Here too is a church of divers sentiments, but of uniform goodness, who enjoy christian liberty, without assuming authority over one another. Here I weed my garden, plough the silver stream with my two-oar boat, read, scribble, contemplate, and fill my soul with ideas of the Great Supreme, and with the joyful prospect of a blessed immortality. Here the blossoms of my flowers and fruits regale my scent; the lark compliments me when I rise; the cuckow attunes the morning breeze; the owl sings me to sleep; and if I wake in the night, the nightingale, beneath my window, lulls me to rest again :—

"These are thy works, Parent of Good."

Here also my distant friends visit me.—The last fortnight, my house has been filled with company from Oxford, Abingdon, London, &c. and, in their absence, I converse with the dead, in the vast libraries of this university. Oh! how good is God to me, and I, with all these advantages, how unprofitable to him! Best of beings—my Father and my God! Thy perfections are the base of my hopes; in Thee I live, in Thee I move, in Thee I have my being! to Thee, to Thee *alone*, be all the glory!

Believe me, my friend, your introduction ele vates my soul. It lifts religion off the sand of authority, and places it on the rock of revelation. It makes the understanding free as the eye. Go on and prosper. Bring received opinions to the crucible. Take off the dross of human authority, antiquity, universality, and the rest; and reserve for public use the pure gold of revealed truth. Truth can never suffer by trial, and doctrines that shrink from examination and severe criticism, betray their origin.

If ever it lies in your way, I should be happy to see you at Chesterton; and when you see my friend Taylor, do me the favour to assure him of my most undisguised esteem.

When yours came, I was just reading the prose works of the divine Milton—one of the first of men. I am never tired of him. Are you acquainted with his Areopagitica, for the liberty of unlicensed printing?—

> "This is true liberty, when free-born men,
> "Having to advise the public, may speak free."

Pardon the length of this. I do not often offend in this way. Without ceremony, farewell.

Ever yours,

R. ROBINSON.

To a Dissenting Minister in Wales.

London, June 1, 1789.

Sir,

As I have not the pleasure of being known to you, I think it necessary to inform you that I am minister of a Baptist congregation at Cambridge, and I trust you will allow me without apology to address a few lines to you on a business common to all christians, and particularly necessary at this time to us baptists. The church at Cambridge admits members on professing to believe—Jesus to be the Son of God. Consequently we hold the perfection and sufficiency of the holy Scriptures, and of course we have a variety of human opinions. Sometime ago, one of our members, an ancient man, who had been pastor of a church at some distance near forty years, applied to the particular baptist fund for a share of the money, which they annually distribute among extra ministers. The fundees wished to have served him, but they informed him that their rules required a confession of faith first. He, being a *Calvinist Trinitarian*, wrote his creed, and sent it. That would not do: they sent him a copy of a confession taken from a little pamphlet, entitled " Rules and Orders &c." He transcribed this with great re-

* The letters which follow are printed from the original M. S.

luctance, for he thought it implied an acknowledgment of their right to impose a human creed, and a tacit denial of the perfection of scripture; however he did transcribe their words, returned the letter, and received five guineas.

After I had silently observed all this, I thought it my duty to shew the secretary of the fund the injustice and impropriety of the fundees presuming to insult their country brethren with human creeds. I observed that the fund was founded by Mr. Hollis in 1715, for the relief of the *Particular Baptists;* that the present creed was drawn up in 1775 without any authority from the *Trust deed.* That many particular baptists could not conscientiously subscribe to the doctrine of three divine *persons* in the Godhead, for they did not believe personality in the sense of the creed, nor did they know what *divine* persons meant, especially as the same fundees sing in public worship—

> Great was the day, the joy was great
> When the *divine disciples* met.

However, not to dispute the truth or falsehood of their creed, the question was—whether they in London had any right to offer human opinions to their brethren in the country, who were as competent to judge of the meaning of scripture as themselves? If they chose to add by their own donations to Hollis's capital they could have no right to confine *his* part to *their* new conditions, but ought to give *that* by *his* rule to particular baptists

undescribed in regard to their notion of the nature of Christ and the Spirit. We observed if this liberty of adding to the words of a donor were allowed, perhaps future trustees might affirm that there were four or six divine persons, and that no one should receive of the fund unless he believed their affirmation. What security have we that it will not be so? What of their own money they have given since 1775 they have certainly affixed to their own conditions; but this cannot operate on the old fund. They say, they have a right:—what? a right to do wrong? No, they can have no right to corrupt the gospel even with their own money. If subscription to human articles of faith be wrong in itself, how can a man make it right by giving money to decoy good men into the practice? The secretary felt these remonstrances and others which accompanied them, and moved the affair at the board, but he and his few friends were out-voted.

Now I am informed they are proceeding to catechize Wales; and I am told, if Wales does not give a good account of its faith, their donations will cease. My friend David of Frome tells me you have written to Mr. Smith, and he David, insisted on my writing to you. Alas! dear Sir, what can I say, except that I abhor all dominion over conscience, and that while these very men are petitioning parliament to free themselves from subscribing to the civil magistrate, it is with a very ill grace indeed that they presume to domineer over

their brethren. I have confidence in our good brethren in Wales, that they will resist such tyranny, by either refusing fund money, or by accepting it free from all conditions of believing this or that. You, the original inhabitants of this country celebrated in all ages even by your oppressors for the love of liberty, will you resign the noblest branch of liberty, liberty of *conscience*, not to prelates and princes,—they do not ask you,—but to a few plain men like yourselves, having no more learning, no more virtue, no more knowledge and piety than yourselves, and no possible pretence for depriving you of this freedom except what the donation of two or three poor guineas a year afford? Sir, was not our Saviour the *finisher* as well as the *author* of faith? Is not his gospel perfect, able thoroughly to furnish a man of God without human additions? Hath he condescended to take the tuition of his disciples, and is he not equal to the execution of the undertaking? Have we more than one master? and is not Jesus that one? How is it then that our brethren give their comments as of equal authority with his text? Can they read, so can we. Can they think of what they read, so can we. Are they free, so are we. Are they accountable to their master and not to us? We also are accountable to him not to them. We do not ask whether their creed be true or false, but whether they have any right to impose it upon us. If it be true, it will stand safe without our subscription. If false will our subscription make it true? Sir, our ancestors resisted the

ranny of Rome in spite of all her pomp and power. We have trod in their steps and dissented from a wealthy established church, because, like the papal hierarchy, she also oppressed us with human creeds, and now shall we suffer four or five poor baptist brethren to put a yoke upon our necks? Oh God forbid! they are self employed. Neither government, magistrates or prelates, set them about this work, nor did we ever send to them a petition humbly to pray them to make a creed for us. Who then elected and commissioned these men? Are they apostles, and have they any *extraordinary* call? Blessed be GOD, the ages of fraud and credulity are over, and, having got by the providence of God, possession of the oracles of God, we are now to judge for *ourselves*, and not to return to infancy to be carried about with every wind of doctrine according to the caprice of unforeseen fundees! We have a sure word in scripture, but how can we expect successive fundees to ascertain the same creed? If then every word were true and our own faith, we would not subscribe this creed, nor own the authority of fundees to make one, lest hereafter they should frame another opposite. But what if it should be neither truth nor sense? They say, you shall not receive any benefit from fund monies unless you profess to believe. What? THE doctrine of Original Sin. Why, there are twenty accounts of original evil: which do the fundees mean? That of St. Augustine? Or that of Soame Jenyns? Neither, but both! THE origin of evil. Ah! why

burden christians with the necessity of deciding a question in metaphysicks; or if they must be metaphysicians why not state their positions clearly? These things tend only to divide, distress and injure christians. Instead of engaging us to love as brethren, they part us into opposite factions, they inspire us with wicked passions, they teach us to neglect and even to persecute one another, and of all such practices what will our sovereign the sole Lord of conscience say when he comes?

Forgive dear Sir, this irregular effusion of my heart, dictated by a sincere love of liberty, but written in great haste, in an inconvenient place with a bad pen; and allow me to wish you may resist this attack upon your christian liberty. I have said and written all I can, ever since I heard of their writing to know what your faith in Wales, is. If you take courage and resist their tyranny, you will find many here to commend you, and join in opposing this oppression. Sir, I have no time to add more than that I am with, I trust, esteem for yourself, and ardent wishes for the freedom and happiness of the brethren of Wales,

Your most affectionate,

Robert Robinson.

I am now on a visit in London, but am usually at home at Chesterton near Cambridge, where I shall be glad to see or hear of you.

To Mrs. T.

Chesterton, July 12, 1779.

MADAM,

This billet only begs leave to thank you, for your hospitality to the writer, and to inform you, that the nursling you was pleased to present me with arrived in perfect health at Chesterton, the third day after I left A——. Its fate since is not unfortunate. My family nurse one root, Miss C——'s gardener another; and I am chaplain to both, and moralize on everlasting bloom and verdure. He, who said, consider the *lilly*, authorised his followers to subjoin, consider every other flower. Indeed these are books well written on the divine attributes, and to read them is reason and religion too. Mrs. C——at my return expressed great pleasure, in hearing of the welfare of your mother and yourself, and desired her respects. Since that she has been very ill. I heard yesterday she was something better. My wife joins in respects to all your house.

I am Madam,

Your obliged humble servant,

R. Robinson.

To the same.

Chesterton, Oct. 8, 1787.

MADAM,

Providence, always better to us than our fears, enabled Mrs. Robinson to perform her journey much beyond expectation, and indulged us with the pleasure of finding the child better.

We quitted your house as Adam and Eve did paradise. Much we knew, and more we dreaded. We proceeded to Thame, Aylesbury, and Tring, where we arrived at seven; it was dark, and Mrs. Robinson found herself too weary and oppressed to proceed further that night. There is but one chaise at Tring, and that was out, and had been hired for the next morning. The road to Dunstable, too, was pronounced the worst in England, and absolutely dangerous. At length, we prevailed on the innkeeper, to send us in the morning to Berkhamstead. Thither at six we went, and thence by a good road to Dunstable, where we breakfasted. We arrived at home about half past three, dreading, you may suppose, to look up at the windows. Taking courage, we observed one window of the child's room curtained, the other clear, but no sash up, and while we were hoping, the boat came over, and the messenger proclaimed, *Julia is better.* She has been sitting up in a chair, and netting a purse. Since then, she continues much the same. The issue only God knows. [Silence is the law, and nobody forbids her parents to hope.

We have no words to express our sentiments of A——, and of your tender friendship. May our future conduct testify!

I ought to have written last night, but the truth is, the illness of the child and the labours of the day, put it out of my power. Whether it were a compliment on my return, or a sympathy with my sorrow, I know not, but the audience yesterday was uncommonly large and crowded. I was very warm, and going home immediately to see the child, I caught cold, and was forced to omit writing, for I was blinded by the head-ach. As soon as I can procure franks, I will send Mr. T—— the memorandums relative to the trust. To him, to all your house, relations and visitors, and to all friends we beg our most cordial respects.

I am, Madam,

With all possible esteem,

Your most obliged

R. Robinson.

To the same.

Chesterton, Oct. 29, 1787.

MADAM,

You will not be surprized when I inform you, that all our hopes and fears concerning *Julia*, ended in her departure on the evening of the 9th instant. You, I know, foresaw it. For my part I wilfully blinded myself; I could not, I would not believe it

could be, but it was and I have felt it, and ever shall feel it. Saturday she seemed better, sat up, gave me a drawing of a moss-rose-bud for my watch, and ate two slices of the breast of a goose and some green pease. Lord's-day worse. Monday worse still. Tuesday up into an easy chair, and put again to bed more than twenty times in the day, yet she ate a bit of hare for dinner. At seven I gave her a night draught, which she took with eagerness, and said, she would not take any thing more to night, but go to sleep. Presently, she said, Nancy kiss me. Nancy kissed her, and Patty. Reclining her head on the pillow she added, Lord into thy hands I commend my spirit, and without a struggle, a sigh, a groan, or any unpleasant appearance, fell asleep. Oh! Mrs. T——, the picture is in my mind. I shall never lose it!

Turn hopeless thought, turn from her,
Thought repelled, resenting rallies, and wakes all my woe.

Julia was the beauty and the pride of my family. She was straight as an arrow, five feet ten inches high. A dark eye like fire, and an oval visage full of sensibility, and sweetness. A complexion like the lilly tinged with the blush of the rose. She had a fund of sterling wit, and a wise, grave reason that directed the use of it. Nothing escaped her observation, and whether she roved in the regions of fancy, or plodded in the facts of creation and providence, her fine reasoning powers reduced all to truth, arranged all in order, and directed all to make her circle happy. She had the most just and sublime notions of God, and a perpetual venera-

tion for him. No suspicions invaded her serene bosom, during a gradual decline of three years: on the contrary, often would she exclaim, his tender mercies are over all his works! Shall not the judge of the whole earth do right! She had felicity enough to enjoy, and to communicate, and her sisters who always waited on her, said, father, Jule is an angel! My heart, my aching heart! She was an angel. Ah! too true! She had wings, and flew away. Do dear Mrs. T——, forgive me. It eases me to write to you, for you, I know, share my grief.

> As on some lonely building's top,
> The sparrow tells her moan,
> So far from tents of joy and hope,
> I set and grieve alone.

I am not offended with the good father in heaven. I have no fears about the lovely spirit of the departed. But will the great being be angry with me for perceiving, when my family assemble, that "David's place is empty?"

How wonderful are God's ways! My mother at ninety, with a complexion and a vivacity proper to seventeen, goes into mourning for seventeen, decrepid, departed, decayed! Mrs. Robinson and the family have borne the shock better than could have been imagined. The lot has fallen upon me, and they in eagerness to comfort me console themselves.

Pardon me madam, that I can think and write of nothing else. I deferred this till I could procure franks, to send the inclosed papers to Mr.

T——. To him and yourself we feel the utmost gratitude and esteem, not merely for the polite performance of both the bounties and the graces of hospitality, but for qualities of piety and goodness of far superior worth.

To Mr. J——, to Miss E——, and to Miss W—— (if with you,) we beg our compliments, as also to the other families of T——s, W——s, T——r, and the rest.

I am, Madam,

In which Mrs. Robinson and house join,

Your most obliged,

R. Robinson.

To a Friend in London.

Chesterton, July 12, 1788.

DEAR SIR,

So it happened, I went into Norfolk in a hurry, through some cross accidents in repairing my house, which detained me beyond my appointment, and left your packet at home. I had determined to write to you from Norfolk, but was obliged to defer it. I do not call this a proper apology for apparent neglect, but it is the truth, and with this I cast myself into the arms of your mercy.

The letters of your friend S——, charm me with their *naiveté*. Free, open, ingenuous as the day,

and full of friendship and manly sense, they seem to come from the heart, and to challenge esteem and confidence. I think, were the young lady mine, I should wish no better opportunity to accomplish her manners, or to liberate her mind from that boorish bigotry, which to the disgrace of protestantism, imprisons so many understandings in prejudice, and prevents improvement in knowledge, and refinement in moral excellence. Not that I think Miss B—— in danger of this at home, but I do think it is the infirmity of many dissenters in London, with whom it is possible she may associate, so that, if danger be in France, danger is in England also. What we most dread in the catholic religion is a spirit of intolerance. It is more absurd and more wicked, than those superstitious ceremonies, which we protestants, pronounce most absurd in that church. The extreme opposite to intolerance is indifference. If in avoiding one we do not slip into the other, I think we hit the narrow path of a wise moderation. If Miss B—— attend the protestant church, if Mrs. S—— encourage her to perform all the duties of protestantism, if the family be virtuous, I see no danger.

Yet after all, say your ingenious friend what he pleases, there is no eye like the eye of a parent, to watch over the health, the habits, and the happiness of a child. In case of sickness or accident *Cognac* is a long way from C——: but sickness may not happen, and it may. Habits of living, too, may be formed incompatible with future connections, nor doth happiness necessarily attend

politesse. What if the lady should return highly finished, and, aware of her superiority, excruciated at the sight of British bluntness! In such a case, her supercilious airs would alienate the affections, of her circle of English friends, as their plain manners would give her perpetual pain. There is, it must be owned, a certain levity in the manners of the French incongruous with some grave and solemn duties of life; nor can a single family, however disposed to do so, counteract a general influence. Hence dissipation of manners, indifference in religion, submission to oppression, intoxication with pleasure, and all the ills, under which with all their *gaieté* that bewitching nation groan. To be polite in France, is to resemble the court: but whoever reads the lives of those courtiers, must confess they are not models fit for us. Justamond's life of Lewis XV. Mrs. Thicknesse's, lives of the ladies of France; Brantome, and all others of the same kind convince me, that Versailles is the European school of dissipation, and that the business of life is sensual gratification, and *sçavior vivre* the art of gilding it with epigrams, points, and pretty sayings. The English think with Young:

> "Wit widow'd of good sense, is worse than nought,
> "And hoists more sail to dash against a rock."

I wish, my friend you had not asked my opinion on a subject so delicate, and of which I am so ill-informed: but your request is a law to me, even in a case of which I have no opinion to give.

I asked myself to sit down under an oak in my sister's grove, to hold the balance, and form an

opinion. I obeyed. I said—Here, I put the benefits of being at home, and there the advantages of Cognac. Here is a father. There a friend. What accomplishment hath this friend, which this father hath not? What qualification hath this father, which his friend hath not? In brief, I weighed B —— against S ——; one lady against another lady; C—— against C——; A protestant church in France, against christian churches in London; a British, like a Roman matron against *madame;* and I asked, which is the state most advantageous to a young female, on whose felicity that of her parent turns? I thought the scale turned much in favour of home, especially as there is no poverty, no discontent, nothing to corrupt, either the manners or the virtue of the innocent lady.

If I say too much blame yourself. I am not competent to speak on such a subject, for I do not know *every* thing in the premises you do, and you alone are equal to the task, as you alone will be accountable for the action. I pray God to guide you. I have no doubt of your acting uprightly. I wish you may proceed successfully. I return the letters as you desired, with thanks for this token of your esteem.

My wife is better for her native air. She does not return till September: my eldest son is at Chesterton. Mr. W—— dismissed him with the most flattering character. He says, he can pledge himself for his ability and integrity. Our plan is, without loss of time, to procure him something to

do in town. I do not ask you to assist him, for I know if any thing falls in your way, you will not fail to advise us of it. I say nothing of him, for parents must be suspected of partiality, and I am not a judge of his counting-house qualifications. All present compliments to yourself, lady and family.

I am, dear Sir,

Your most obliged,

R. Robinson.

To the same.

Chesterton, July 17, 1788.

Dear Sir,

WITH thanks for your friendly letter, I beg leave to inform you, (I am sorry I omitted it before) the fans came safe, and with them new obligations to you, your friend F——, and the donor.

I am convinced by your summing up the case, that the scale turns in favour of the young lady's going to Cognac. I pray God every benediction may accompany all concerned it.

Mr. W——. said of my son all I could wish. He desired me only to write a note, if he could render him any service, and he added, I can recommend him for two things, ability and integrity. I shall say nothing because he is mine. Mr. W—— has been a father to him, and left upon my mind impressions which time can never efface.

You are a man of business, and I shall intrude no longer than to say, all this family join with me in presenting best respects to yourself and lady.

I am, Dear Sir,

Your obliged friend,

R. Robinson.

To the same.

Chesterton, March 13, 1789.

There are about three persons, there may be four, in the circle of my London acquaintance, whose merits weigh so heavy in one scale, that their *Pittism* in the other is a mere feather. Believe me, you are one of the small number, and I shall not attempt to convert you, and should you attempt, you shall not succeed in converting me. No, no, your intercourse and mine shall be free as the day, chearful as the spring, and perfectly innocent as that of two smiling school boys.

" Bring a cup of sack boy, there is no virtue extant ?"

" The University did not address." O Sir Solomon Silver-toe! Yes, Sir, I knew Solomon Silver-toe before he was knighted! Well, Sir, this I say of Sir Solomon, craving his favour, that nobody knows which corner the wind is in better than he. Why, Sir Solomon hath gone through

a course of academical education, and education is worth nothing unless it learns a man two ways of doing every thing. The vulgar know only one, and that is the right on way; but, to have one end, and that self-interest, and to have the direct and the retrograde road to attain it, yes, to understand the zig-zag well is the glory of a scholar!

Soberly, I hope soon to have the pleasure of seeing you, and then, come of politicks what will, I doubt not we shall make out an agreeable interview. A bad cold has hurt my eyes, and I use an amanuensis, because I think it my duty to thank you for your most acceptable favour.

I am, dear Sir, with compliments

in which all this family join,

Your most obliged humble servant,

R. Robinson.

To the same.

Chesterton, July 18, 1789.

Sir,

Two days ago Master H—— called, and informed us of your welfare. Yesterday Mr. M—— favoured us with five minutes, and told me you had heard I was ill. I thank God you have been misinformed. I consider your solicitude for my welfare as a new obligation, and I most sincerely thank you for it.

Assure yourself I pay all manner of respect to your opinion about an answer to Dr. Grisdale. I am thinking it over and over, for you would not wish me to do any thing rashly. I have been even trying to bring my mind to yours. If I succeed, you shall hear of it. At present the cause is pending, B—— *versus* Robinson. Thanks to Mr. B—— and you for the inclosed letters. Mr. Turner [of Abingdon] is a father, as you say, and his whole deportment is that of a patriarch. Mr. —— is rich, a batchelor, and a reputed miser, and yet he is the only man, except yourself, who ever gave me the least pecuniary assistance toward the book I am about. He once brought me, an entire stranger to him, ten guineas toward the expence of collecting materials. I, therefore, never allow the popular name of him, a miser, for such he was *not* to me.

We expect Mrs. B—— next week, with whom I wish it were possible to see any or all of your family at Chesterton. I enjoy over again by recollection, my late vision of angels in town. What a number of tutelar gods and guardian angels did you shew me? Their faces like suns and stars emit rays of felicity. I only opened my eye, and their pictures were painted on the retina, and there remain unsullied. Was it you, or Dr. H——, or the shining countenance of the blossom at C——, or the matured sweetness of face of good Mr. Y——, or who was it that made me a physiognomist? My love to the chattering little

charmer. Would she were here with her little basket!

In answer to Mr. Knott's favour, I think he need not send any more letters to country ministers at present. Whenever the work goes to press, an advertisement will sufficiently make it known. I had rather let the work make its own way, than extend the sale of it by puffing. There is a fraud and a meanness in puffing advertisements, which disgrace the authors of them, and they are more fitted to nauseate men of sense, than to conciliate their esteem.

My wife is well as usual, and desires me to transmit her grateful thanks to you for your great civility to her while in London. We have here a series of bad weather, cold, foggy, rainy, so that very little hay is well got in, and the corn, though great and heavy, does not ripen kindly, and it is doubtful whether we shall ever be able to get it in dry and marketable. We, and all we have, are in hands wiser than our own, and that is our happiness.

Believe me to be,

Dear Sir,

Your most obliged servant,

R. Robinson.

To the same.

Chesterton, Feb. 5, 1790.

DEAR SIR,

I am exceedingly sorry to be obliged to inform you, after the most dilligent search for Mr. Farmer's book on the Demoniacks, I only find that I lent it to A. who ventured to shew it to B. who was so civil as to oblige C. with a sight of it, who took the liberty to lend it to his friend D. who vows upon his honour that either E. or F. took it only for three days, and in that time lost it out of sight, and to all this what can I say except that—

Alas! my partridge is flown to the fields again.

I am sure Dr. Price, Dr. Rees, and that kind of ministers have the book, and hold it very much at your service, and were I in town, I would hunt it up, for I doubt whether it be to be purchased, at least I have not heard of a new edition.

I cannot at present recollect whether my answer to your last favour was sent. I shall search, and if I find it was not, I shall endeavour to discharge that obligation. I hope the family at C——, is all well, to whom I beg my compliments, as also to the house at P——, and all your friends in town.

I am,

Dear Sir,

Your's most affectionately,

R. ROBINSON.

To a Friend in London.

Chesterton, Feb. 23, 1788.

Dear Sir,

True enough, I did receive a basket, carriage paid, of the finest Portugal onions I ever saw, and a box of plumbs; but most piteously was I perplexed to guess which of my friends had found out the secret of my fondness of Portugal onions. I love them to excess, and so do several of my family. We rioted however in sumptuous living, but were not able to fix on our benefactor till your favour arrived. And now what am I to say? Why briefly this. I value the present at nothing compared with the esteem of which it is a token. What price I set on the friendship of yourself, and your good brother, I am not able to say. To be valued by the wise and good is a high flattery to me, and I set it against the snarls of ill-will, just as I set the moon walking in brightness against the yelling of my yard-dog. But it seems this favour is to be crowned with a greater, and I am to have the pleasure of seeing you at Chesterton soon. It must be soon indeed if you get the scent of an onion, for yesterday they appeared so beautiful in the eyes of two of your friends that each took in his pocket one of gigantick size. How onions rise in value when you condescend to touch them! B—— and friendship glisten on the silvery skin, and the onion rises a pine-apple to the taste.

Now give me leave to say one word on a liberty I have ventured to take, and if it be licentiousness, preach repentance and I will perform pennance. You must know, my youngest son has been a voyage to Smyrna with a captain B——. What the captain has done to him I know not, but suppose he has treated him with so much civility that his leisure moments are usually spent in reporting the perfection of his nautical knowledge, the wisdom and prudence of his management, the politeness of his manners, and in brief he considers him as the sum of all that the captain of a trading vessel ought to be. If the captain goes to the West-Indies, he would give his ears, as we say, to go with him. He says, he never sees him but he learns something. I think it my duty by letter to thank this gentleman, and as I must not pay the postage, and ought not to put him to expence, I have ventured to inclose it to you, hoping if you see him on 'change you will give it him, and if not, you will seal and send it by the penny post. I leave it unsealed that you may the better understand what the youth is about, as, you must know, if he does not sail with Captain B——, I intend to apply either to Mr. S——, or to Mr. T—— B—— to help him to a birth if they can. Had Mr. M—— been here I should have availed myself of his complaisance, for he would have franked to captain B— ,and I should not have troubled you.

In hopes of the pleasure of seeing you soon, I conclude, but not without my wife and family,

who roast your onions, drink your tea, smack your wine, and present their most respectful compliments to self and brother,

Along with dear Sir

Your obliged

ROBERT ROBINSON.

To the same.

Chesterton, March 10, 1789.

Once for all, my dear Sir, accept my thanks for your short notes, they are the only letters we expect from you. I protest, in the sincerity of my soul, that were you to write me long, frequent epistles, in established form, I should be frighted, for I should suspect either that you had very little business, or that you did not pay proper attention to it, or that you thought but meanly of both our understandings and our hearts. Now any one of these would be a daily source of sorrow to me. You have much at stake; what a deplorable thing would it be, if you had little or no business? If you had much business, and no heart to give yourself up to it, if you let slip golden opportunities, for the sake of writing complimentary letters, I should inwardly execrate you for a fool, and though I might compliment your copper-plate hand, and your courtly phrases of point and wit, yet I could

not love you as I do now, as one of the pillars of society. When a real friend visits me, I dine him with my partner and my family, in domestic guise, in the daily dining parlour, but when a hollow dear friend excessively happy to see me comes to make his leg under infinite professions of esteem, I durst not trust the rascal with the interior of my house; I order a great fire in the hall, a great deal of form, and as much attention to be paid him as would be due to a thief, who came to pocket a pair of salts or spoons. Form in friendship resembles ceremony in religion. One of our former great officers of state, used to date his self-enjoyment from that moment, every day in which he had accustomed himself to throw off his gown on to a sopha, and exclaim,—lie there Lord treasurer! Perhaps you'll say I use my friends, as Justice Shallow used his friend Falstaff and his train.

> "I will use him well. . . . Use his men well, Davy:
> "For they are arrant knaves, and will backbite."

Well, say so, and say what you please beside. You use M—— well, and make her happy, and so go on to say and do what you like to me.

ROBERT ROBINSON.

To the same.

Chesterton, July 3, 1789.

"Is not this a wondrous thing, see now?" That I should imagine I conferred a favour on my most dear Mr. B——, by shortening my epistles in consideration of his most important letters, and yet that he should complain of this very article, shortness of letters? Know, Sir, if I wrote letters ever so long, I should not be able to say how high I value your personal merit, how much and how sincerely I esteem you, every day I spent in your house affording me fresh evidence of your skill and industry in business, your tenderness to my dearest M——, in brief, of your propriety in every point of view, in which one man can stand before another. For other men I say, God be merciful to you sinners! but for you I say, God reward you according to the cleanness of your hands! Good man! In my eye, best of men! May the benedictions of heaven in the richest profusion rest upon you, and crown your efforts with lasting prosperity, and the ardent love of all that have the happiness to know you! These are not hasty effusions extorted by your warm friendship, and your hospitable table: but these are, witness ye shades of all the dead that are enshrined in these shelves, these are the cool effusions of a heart animated only by the essence of the white cow's innocent beverage. Upon these subjects I could write long letters, extracted

from an inexhaustible fund of affection within: but what? Shall I offend your modesty? Shall I even tempt you to think I flatter? Suffer me to avoid these, for I am ambitious to be esteemed by you, and could you think me false you could not love me as I wish to be esteemed by you.

I could also write long letters upon other subjects. I could say, Postlethwayte is master of Trinity, Jesus lies between Dr. Edwards, Mr. Masters, and the deputy professor of divinity: the latter has the best chance. No oratorio this year. Kipling preached the annual sermon for the hospital, returned his fee of ten guineas, and the charity cleared eighty-four pounds. Next Tuesday is the commencement, and such and such take degrees····And pray what would all this be to you? A merchant listening among bills and books to a string of university news, what a novel phenomenon! How ominous too! Were he a debtor to me, I should draw, and disconcert his reveries to beg he would accept my bill.

Here is another "wondrous thing, see now." Arrived thus far, in compliance with your wish, in the road towards a long letter about nothing, or improprieties worse than nothing, up spring twenty thousand bees, threatning if they be not instantly waited on, they will be served by another house: out runs the girl with the bell, and about the garden scouts one for fennel, and another for wormwood, and what did I? Why I went out, and said to myself—Atheist! would you were here! Philosopher! come hither, leave your books and

instruments, bring only your understanding and reason; at least five minutes reason on the works of God. Hither, too, let christian content repair. What a numerous family, what stores of wealth all around, in thousands and tens of thousands of flowers. This is a present from heaven, now worth half a guinea, at Michaelmas one guinea, perhaps next year two guineas. What interest for a six-penny stool, an eightpenny hive, and a tenpenny pan! Come hither children to your tutors, learn to live by labour, by frugality, by setting a just value on small things; mark the little swarm, each bee loaded with two little pellets of wax; see what unity does; thousands of these tiny pellets will make millions of cakes of wax, more than a strong team can draw. But where is my long letter? Lost and forgotten in attention to the longer and louder voice of nature. So, nature and art, the hive and the counting-house both say, mind your business, and leave long letters to such as have nothing else to do. I am come back however to finish.

No, I do not forget either wife or bairns, but I hope you will inform that gossip, that the bairns at home think, and I think, she is very cruel to forget us, and we judge she ought, in spite of all the charms of ——, and they are many, to "speed her way home to her nown gude mon."

Now, Sir, in form: with chearful congratulations on Mrs. B——'s recovery, with joint adorations to the physician of mankind, with thanks for your hospitality, both to me and my dame,

with earnest invitations to self and co. to spare a few hours to Chesterton, and with strict command to madam to come home, as she will answer for contempt of our authority; I am, in which all here join, and in which we include all your family and friends,

Most devotedly yours,

R. Robinson.

To the same.

Chesterton, August 26, 1789.

DEAR SIR,

I am to thank you for two notes and parcels, which I do most sincerely. You may not come to glean, unless you swear before a magistrate, to your settlement, and prove yourself a Chesterton pauper, but you may come to harvest-home, if the weather holds dry, Saturday or Monday next. Plumb-puddings and rustick songs, roast beef, old beer, and old Robin Gray will be our fare, highly finished off before break of day, with a deep toned, "largess! my leige!" the effect of a conjunction of the two constellations, liberality, and love, the very essence of malt. There, each outspeaks another, and without either malice or headach, drinks, smokes, sings, quarrels, dances, and parts with a hearty God bless us all. Harvest comes but once a year! What there is in a belly-full of beer, to

make such clod-pates so very happy, none but a clod-hopper knows, but surely it must be something very charming! I believe the joy originates in the conscious merit of having obtained, with some skill and much labour, a good crop of corn, and the beer liquidates the gum of which their heads are formed, and capacitates the machine to play off the tune. With them,

> Their corn and cattle, are their only care,
> And their supreme delight, a country fair.

Tell friend W—— our speculators are buying whole crops of barley, to be delivered any time between now and lady day, at a guinea a quarter. I think they buy too dear. Surely malting must be a fine trade!

R. Robinson.

To the same.

Chesterton, May 17, 1790.

Sir,

I must beg leave through you to inform Mr. Knott, that if possible, a deal of copy ought to come to me within the succeeding fortnight, otherwise, I intend to be from home, and more time and some difficulty will be necessary to the correction of them. Monday, May 31, I mean to set out from home for Fenstanton, in the county of Huntingdon; Saturday following, June 5, I hope to

arrive at Dr. Priestley's, Birmingham. If it should be necessary, that a proof-sheet should meet me there, it must be addressed, Mr. Robinson, at the Rev. Dr. Priestley's, Birmingham. Thence on the 9th I proceed forward, and till the 15th my address will be, Mr. Robinson, at the Rev. Mr. Gentleman's, Kidderminster, Worcester. Saturday June 19th I hope to be at home.*

Yesterday we heard of you by Mr. Frend, who is returned in health, and sends compliments; I intend to return the bit of copy by Mr. Curtis, next Saturday. He is, I understand, going to town, and I will beg him to take an opportunity some day to leave it either with you, or Mr. Knott.

Love to all,

Dear Sir, Yours,

R. Robinson.

* Mr. Robinson died on the 9th at Birmingham.

To the Rev. S. Lucas, Shrewsbury.

Chesterton, Sept. 16, 1789.

Dear Sir,

This day I received your favour of the 9th. instant, and as I intend about ten days hence to go into Berkshire by London, I write this to take with me, and send you under cover. Know, my

friend, that though I could justly and truly say much to you on the subject of personal esteem, yet I omit all, assuring you that what I value in you not being of the perishable kind, as far as I see, will not diminish but increase in years, and of course as the object magnifies, the esteem attached to it will increase. So much for compliment. Now to the business of yours.

True it is, I have spent three years in attention to a history of the baptists. I found it necessary to divide my plan into four parts, the first I made a History of Bap*tism*. The second a History of Bap*tists* in the primitive ages. The third, a History of Bap*tists* in the middle ages. The last a history of the same people from the reformation to the present time. I have written three quarto volumes. The work being great, I lately resolved to qublish the first volume only, being independent of the rest, and by way of trial whether a work of the kind would pay for printing.—The publication of the other three will depend wholly on circumstances, but whether I print them or not, the first volume is intended for a complete history of baptism. Some time ago I printed one sheet by way of specimen, but having no conveyance I could not send you one. These first principles, I trust will enable you to unravel all the mysterious accounts you mention.

How shall I enter upon speculative questions, now that I am correcting a proof sheet, and preparing more copy to send by post to my printer in London?

Believe me, I am neither a Socinian, nor an Arian; I do not know among what class of *heretics* to place myself: sometimes I think I am a Paulianist, or Samosetanian; for I think Jesus a man in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwells; and I give him more dignity than they do, who ascribe to him only a third part of Deity. Years ago reverence for great names misled me. I said after Clarke, there was a scripture Trinity; and I would say so still if I could tell what I meant; but as I cannot, I cast that phrase also to the bats and moles. There is, there can be only one first cause; Jesus is his son, his representative, and, if you please, your God, the vicegerent of the supreme, whom you honour, by honouring him. I do not think God ever proposed the question of the nature of Jesus to us to determine; it is a child of the schools, born in litigation, and subsisting by it to this day, to the utter ruin of genuine piety and christian benevolence. I have done answering vague scholastical questions, for they lead into intricate and endless labyrinths; the sense of any passage of scripture I am willing to discuss; by this distinction I save myself a deal of trouble. "Pray," says one, "do you believe Jesus Christ is God?"....."I do....and I do not."..."Pray do you believe the atonement?"....."Not your gross description of it; yet, I cannot think all the passages that speak of the death of Christ are to be taken figuratively." In brief, I believe the scriptures, the record that God hath given of his

son; but as for the rash questions which the schools, in their great wisdom, have started, be so good as to settle them among yourselves, and allow one disciple of Christ to sit at his feet, and be content with hearing his word, and no more. Disputants here want me to take a side; and because I refuse to do so, they represent me as a man void of all principle, to whom truth and error are alike indifferent: what I say of *scholastic theology, that* they apply to the gospel of our Lord; as if a man who held their brangles indifferent, held the sacred truths of revelation so; but these knights errant of orthodoxy are a fierce, calumniating generation, and this I extremely dislike in them; if orthodoxy alone were in them, one would pity and pardon their nonsense; but when it is accompanied, as it mostly is, with a spirit of persecution, say what they will about faithfulness, and zeal, it is, and must be offensive to God and good men. I adore God for so loving the world as to send his son; I embrace him as an unspeakable gift; I believe his doctrines, trust his promises, copy his life, imbibe his disposition, and live in hope of the glory he has promised all his disciples. I have no doubts, and I want none of the reputation which this host of men lavish upon one another. The difference between them and us, is, they represent us as enemies of Christ, and treat us accordingly; but we take them to be babies in Christ's family, patiently hear their babblings, and only will not suffer them to govern the family. What they are, about you, I know not; but here they are the greatest

gossips, the busiest censors, the most zealous calumniators in the county. I had rather believe all the heresies stirring, than rob one man of his character, or injure in any degree my fellow creature. By faith Calvin, barbarous Calvin, burnt Servetus, and by faith, that false, drunken debauchee, St. Augustin, obtained a good report: and their followers make nothing of a holy life, but like their masters, cry up faith, in their nostrums, to heaven. In a free country what occasion have we to be gulled so; let us return to the purest ages, before such troublers of the world had uttered their oracles, and let the oracles of God be our faith, and the life of Jesus our model of living. On the darling topics of pulpit scolds, I have nothing to say, except, take care in the croud, you do no mischief to your friends. Beware how you distribute sentences of damnation. Oh! that you would altogether hold your peace, it should be your wisdom. Such are my wishes for the biggest fools among my orthodox neighbours; I hope you have none like them.

I wish you were here, I would burn this scratch, and sit down at your feet, and you should catechize me. I perceive I have not replied, as I ought, to your letter; in truth, the papers before me have irritated me to haste, insomuch that I have not allowed myself time to mend my pen, and I only allow this to pass, in order to prove my inclinationto obey you; for assure yourself that

I am, Dear Sir,

Most entirely yours,

 R. Robinson.

To a Dissenting Minister.

Hauxton, Dec. 3, 1766.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I am far from thinking myself able to advise you, on so important a subject, as a removal, which in my opinion, should never be thought on but on just and solid grounds, which will bear the test before God, and commend themselves to the consciences of sober impartial christians; but without ceremony, I will embrace the liberty you give me, and in obedience to your request, shew also my opinion, which I the rather do, as I have passed through something of the like kind.

They say, three things authorize a pastor's removal; want of health, want of maintenance, and want of success, and that wherever it can be fairly proved that any one of these is the case, a minister may without scruple remove. I confess, to me, these three want a particular explication: it is not a slight illness which is meant, but *such* a want of health, as disables a man from filling up the duties of his office, and which a different air will remedy; nor by want of maintenance, can I understand, a *want of many accomodations*, which to the flesh are pleasing enough, but rather a want of the *necessaries*, and many *conveniencies* too, of life, which are absolutely necessary to enable a man to provide things *honest*, in the sight of all men. The want of success is of all the hardest to determine; for,

are we good judges of our success; may we prescribe to God, or demand of him all the converts we chuse? Different gifts are for different services; to convince is one man's work; to convert, another, to plant one, and to water another, God giving increase to all. To speak directly to your case, I really think, (as far as I can judge by your account) that your removal is lawful: your *health* is prejudiced, your *maintenance* deficient, and your *success* small. You ask, "what will become of the people?" I answer, 30*l.* livings, are in my opinion, like college fellowships, for single men, and such an one they may procure; for why should the minister be the *only one* in the congregation, whose duty it is to waste his own property; and who, when he dies, leaves a widow in circumstances more necessitous, than any of his society.

I am sorry for the bigotry of my Baptist brethren: blessed be God, our church here is of another stamp, and admits open communion; and mixed congregations flourish most hereabouts, while strict ones nurse one another to death. Pardon me, I speak to an independant,—no, to a friend, I mean. I firmly believe, the Baptist cause to be the best cause in the kingdom, but worst managed: however, I admire your spirit, in that you would be willing to give your flock up to a Baptist church. I find hereby, you are no bigot. The Lord shed abroad his love in your heart, and then you will ever feel that temper, that complacent, that benign, and evangelic temper, of loving us as brethren.

. . . . . .

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Who could tell you, I was an author: my works consist of two hymns, which Mr. Whitefield printed; besides these I have printed nothing. Do me the favour of undeceiving such as say I am an author, for I am not ambitious of being numbered amongst that sort of gentry, some of whom I am acquainted with, and who teaze me perpetually to sell their paltry productions, which are more the fruits of pride than grace. I am ready to ask pardon on my knee for your last cool reception; let me see you some where this way, for I have much to tell you. I was once with a people at Norwich, who raised me 12*l.* a year. I thought it my duty to remove when I married, though I had staid till I wasted a good deal of my own: when I came to Cambridge, the first half year's pay was 3*l.* 12*s.* for we had but bare walls, and they fit to tumble about our ears. Well, if it was not for expence of postage, I should write, I know not how many sheets to you; but we had better meet, and save charges: sixpenny worth is soon talked: I shall wait impatiently for a line from you, tell me in it when you will come.

My mother, (who is here at present,) wife and friends, join in due respects, to your whole self.

I am,

Yours cordially,

R. Robinson.

To the same.

Cambridge, April 6, 1767.

Well Sir, it seems I am at length to see you, and that at S——, and O! marvellous; contrary to the decree of the elders, scribes, doctors, &c. of our London sanhedrim. I said nothing to you onthat head, not being willing to say one word, till I saw how you would act yourself; but seriously, when I see a man of God, wholly immoveable in the country, but as the wire is drawn by a London *Rabbi*, which communicates motion to him, methinks I see, not a church of Christ, acting on their own principles, but a kind of machine, (I will not say puppet show,) absolutely walking in the light of other people, and moving as *man* moves, not the *Spirit*. Methinks I see another *Samson*, bound with *withs* by *Philistine* Lords, and I despair of seeing him do much for God, till like his predecessor he shakes himself, and bursts the bondage from him. That word has done me good; *why trimmest thou thy way to seek love*. Brother, let us turn from all views of interest, character, influence, and a multitude of *et ceteras*, and let us see duty in God's word, and then in spite of doctors and devils, let us travel on: *the breaker is gone up before us*. O! glorious, like the kine, nature makes us *low*, but like them, supernatural power carries us forward.

Tell me, for goodness sake, what is there in London air that thus metamorphoses mankind? How is it, that, as soon as a poor brother gets ordained in London, he becomes a *London minister;* that is, he buys us with other people's money,—the *funds:* he ceasesto advise, and commences dictator: he gravely sits in judgment on us, our wives, little ones, and substance; and perhaps when we have travelled to oblige these great men, I know not how far; we come back laden with a good coat, or great wig; too little and bald for the clerical coffee-house, and hugging our chains, we admire the gifts as grapes of *Eshcol!* Well, the carnality of the whole disgusts me, and blessed be God, *Robinson* can ramble with impunity, though in their esteem, a kind of out-law, a wild savage. If possible I will be at S —— on the 27th in the evening, but I shall write to Mr. C——. I have no time to write more; blessed be God, I have upwards of twenty to baptize this week, and to receive next Lord's day. Dr. Gifford will be here.

Farewell,

I bear you on my heart,

Yours unalterably,

R. Robinson.

To the same.

Cambridge, May 23, 1768.

Dear Sir,

Your present I prize more than a larger volume, and pray that I may be enabled to make a proper use of the directions. I presume they are your own composing; the Lord succeed your labours. I distributed some yesterday to the Cantabs who were at meeting: they say you ought to have sent an hundred; truly you are more amiable to me in such a little sensible, spiritual piece, than if you had appeared a fool in folio: tell me is it your writing? Go on, we have several short psalms in the word: brief mementos put into the hands of the people of God. I wish you would employ yourself this way: forgive my babbling.

You wonder I have not wrote, visited, exchanged, &c. Ah! could I but spend an hour or two with you, I would, as Herbert says, say to you—

"Dear friend, sit down, the tale is long and sad."

You know the opinions and cast of ..... no doubt a libertine: such he was at ——, till his meeting was an habitation of dragons, &c. For my part, I think if Diabolus was incarnate, he would be a *Hussite* in judgment, a libertine in practice, and with an orthodox head, would dispute for christianity, only to disgrace it. God knows I am a poor sinful creature, but libertinism I abhor. O! my God, art thou the author, protector, minister

of sin? No, surely! *If any man say I know him, and keep not his commandments, he is a liar.* Against this old leaven I have ever endeavoured to work, nor has much opposition appeared till lately. Scorched as it were like dogs at the fire, they have growled, got up, and laid down again, and again, but at last have barked at the fire itself. One lately questioned, declared, that it was difficult to say whether the bible, or *Hussey's* great book was most eligible. Give me the former, and if the devil took the latter it would not trouble me. The *Bundle of Myrrh*, I am in earnest, has more in it than that huge book, wrote one would think to puzzle plain things, and to set the whole world together by the ears. In scarcity of all things, not a bit of bread for their hungry souls, these seven or eight watch to play some dividing game amongst us. Is this a time to go out a visiting. The people utterly refuse their consent, nor have I so much as been to Wickham-brook since I saw you last. The few say I deny all the doctrines of grace. They watch every minister that comes, and play off his sermon against mine as much more orthodox. Blessed be God they are poor and of no account! Ah! were they like *Diotrephes* at W——, in purse and power; but the Lord knows what I can bear, and proportions my day to my strength; now I feel, once I saw, and believed a little of your former troubles: ah! did my all come through the hands of these clear headed, cold-hearted gentry, I should have it hissing hot sometimes:—but enough!

After all, their outcries have done good, brought more hearers, opened peoples' eyes, and struck the hearts of all with a knowledge and hatred of libertinism; the church grows, but secretly: we who know most of the affair fear a spread of the spirit, therefore judge it best to keep at home at present; indeed they said they would agree to my absence, if you would come to Cambridge; but pray come if possible, and provide a supply for S—— elsewhere, that I may be at home when you visit us. All this is *inter nos:* make the best excuse you can for me to Mr. W——, tell him as soon as it is in my power, I will endeavour to come over, but when it will be I know not.

I am charged to present respects to you and Mrs. L——, by several, you know who: mine to all friends: let me hear from you: I wish you joy of the girl. The man waits to carry the letter.

Farewell,

Yours in unalterable respect,

R. Robinson.

To the same.

Hauxton, May 19, 1770.

My Dear Sir,

I cannot find the direction for Mr. F—— in London, nor can I see any way of sending now but this; forgive it for once. What good end will

an exchange answer; I would not give a pin to be at S—— without you: and I have a sincere desire to come. I'll tell you how let it be. Come over and spend one Lord's-day at Cambridge, and as many more days as you chuse. What if you should take a circuit round the villages here with me? I should have your company and that I want. In return I will try to spend five or six days with you before the summer's gone, one of which shall be a Lord's day if I can get a supply.

In regard to Saurin, I cannot make out what you mean about the preface: is it this expression; "such a man does not die:" if it be, an ellipsis explains it; "he does not so properly cease to exist, as commence a better existence." In short, I cannot answer till you tell me what you mean. The French *nous* literally translated, redeems Mr. S. from the charge of *egotism*, of all faults one of the greatest. A certain divine between thee and me, was sometime ago so afraid of egotisms, that he carefully avoided the use of all words that had the little letter *i* in them: whereas *i* in the middle of a word, is a most harmless animal, sometimes a very harmonious one; it is never disagreeable but when it stands alone, disdains its native size, and assuming an air of corpulence becomes of the greatest importance. *I* shall shew you. *I* will explain. *I* will unfold. *I* will conclude.

> As who should say *I* am Sir Oracle,
> And when *I* ope *my* lips let no dog bark, &c.
>
> SHAKESP.

I agree with you that "a shallow and superfi- "cial way of preaching prevails;" but pray introduce another and a better way at S——: people here do not seem to know their own religion. You know these Hudibrastics.

'Tis well known preachers can speak *greek*
As naturally as pigs squeak;
And *latin* is no more difficile
Than to a blackbird 'tis to whistle:
And *hebrew* roots also are found
To flourish most in barren ground;
For *rhetoric* they cannot ope,
Their mouths, but out there flies a trope;
In *mathematics* they are greater
Than Tycho Brahe, or Erra Pater.
Beside each is a shrewd *philosopher*,
And has read ev'ry text and gloss over;
Each is in *Logic* a great critic
Profoundly skill'd in Analytic:
They know what's what, and that's as high
As *metaphysic* wit can fly.
They can raise scruples, dark and nice,
And after solve them in a trice;
As if divinity had catch'd,
The itch, on purpose to be scratch'd. &c.

Forgive my dear friend, my scribbling Butler's doggrel to a grave divine,—but seriously let us try to be other men than such fantastic apes as these.

I believe Mr. Claude is in the press: the printer has promised me the revisal of the first sheet several weeks. I have none of Saurin's printed sermons, they may be had at Dilly's, a second will

come out soon. Write shortly, and fix to come any week but that in which is the *longest day.*

Farewell,

Yours ever,

R. Robinson.

Hauxton, May 2d. 1771.

My dear sir,

If my letters "puzzle your pate," you are even with me, for yours pain my heart. If I am sincere in any thing in the world, to be sure I am in my professions of friendship for you: but I have not been at S——. I wish I could revenge that reproach on you. I would come and stay a month, and be as cross as a bear all the while: be assured I will come this summer if the Lord spares me. I have had one fit of the ague, and a week's fever this spring, but am recovered. As to Dr. Moore, I paid all the respect to your recommendation in my power. O! had I held the purse strings of some people but for one hour, I would have made a sound that should have rung as far as *Nova Scotia.* I went with him to the Presbyterians, who had no minister: there about eight pounds; Mr. S—— eleven pounds; at ours twenty six pounds. I also went with him to Walden, where he got fourteen pounds: he is a man of fine

sense, the cause is a good one, but do you know his sentiments?

I must explain what I mean by "Scorn's attendance on a quiet mind." I mean that a fierce disputant for any doctrines, or any forms, will be caressed by carnal people embracing those forms; but that a man who enters into the spirit of the gospel, and grows like his leader, less attentive to words than things, will favour all parties, consequently be the champion of none. *Love without dissimulation is rare*, especially in the *cloth;* each looks for his gain from his quarter. As to Mr. Claude, a London printer has had it a year and an half: I am at a loss to know his drift; he neither prints it, nor returns it; he says it will always be saleable, as Mr. Claude's reputation is established; but the expence will be one hundred pounds or more. I intend to write for it again, and insist on the copy. *Pentycross* has been a long time in London, his father was ill, and now is dead; he returns to college this week. I will see after the book when he comes; he has got his testimonial with great difficulty; however, he has got it, and will be ordained in a fortnight; he goes then to be curate to Mr. Stillingfleet, near Leeds in Yorkshire. As to his piety and zeal, it is like other christians; first warm, then wise. Mr. De-Coetlogon is settled in Kent, near Maidstone, and is faithful, if not so useful as could be desired.

In regard to some odd words in Saurin, in my opinion they are pretty generally understood: however, should I translate any more, I shall pro-

fit by your kind hint. I earnestly wish to see you at Cambridge. You may be sure your friends will be glad to see you: with all the fidelity of my heart, I protest it would give me much pleasure.

Have you ever read any of Jonathan Edwards's works of New England: his piece on *The Freedom of the Will*, and that chiefly *on Religious Affections*, are most masterly pieces indeed. If an old rotten hearted professor was as high as the monument, it would tumble him down. Abundance of enthusiasm is detected, and heaps of the *tables of them that sell doves*, turned topsy-turvy. Mr. Gordon, (once of Ipswich,) has abridged that piece on Religious Affections; and I wish if you have not read, you would read it, and send me your thoughts, or rather bring them.

Pray tell me what time of year a man must make a pilgrimage through your county, to see most of the country devotions. I should be glad to be present at some of your associations if possible. I hope this is a Laconic epistle, as you style the rest. My love to all friends, concludes me,

Dear Sir,

Yours as formerly,

R. Robinson.

To the same.

Hauxton, April 11, 1772.

DEAR SIR,

Your skill in arithmetical calculations, fully convinces me of the propriety of my application to you for advice: the cogency of your reasoning, as well as the coincidence of it with Mr. H——'s advice turns my mind.

I share your pleasure of Dr. Nowell's disgrace. May every *Goliah* be so *slain!* Suppose I send you *Claude*, in the original? Perhaps I can prevail with my friend to lend it you? for after all I am afraid of sending papers, which should they be ever printed, must, (if torn, or soiled, or any way blemished,) be wrote over again. Suppose you spend a week with us in summer, cannot we read them over together here? The last proposal I vote for. I forgive all you say about adulation; the rather because my conscience does not reproach me with exaggerating.

Since I had your last, I have seen *Bellamy's letters to Hervey.* I was transported at seeing my notions of loving God put into words, and ideas of law and faith disentangled from error. Bellamy and Edwards are upon the same plan, but Edwards seems to me the greatest man: though both are beyond criticism, do not they (after all,) overstrain the bow? Without doubt, if it were possible for

a creature to exist independent on God, that creature must admire the grandeur and beauty of his nature, and love him for himself: but since no creature does so exist, it is hard to say when love is disinterested; the very pleasure we feel in the act of admiration is interest; and to abstract love from pleasure, that is, love from interest, must be extremely difficult, if not impossible. I should suppose *true* love of two *sorts*, or rather two *degrees* of the same love, the first interested, almost, if not altogether so; the latter (considered *comparatively* with the former, not *absolutely* in itself,) disinterested. I should think the religion of most people begins with the first, and rises by degrees into the last, most of all refined and sublimated in heaven. I should be afraid to condemn all that love God for interest, yet would exhort all to aspire at the last. I must abridge.

I have been lately reading, and re-reading, studying, and re-studying, *Brown's Essays on Shaftsbury's Characteristics*. The *Characteristics* have some fine sensible things in them, and they struck me, though I own the burlesque which that noble writer treated religion with, rather vexed than stunned me; but *Brown's* is a most complete answer indeed. His first essay proves that ridicule is no test of truth, but a species of eloquence, and may make the best things contemptible unjustly. The second treats of man's obligations to virtue, and the necessity of religious principle: here the nature of virtue is canvassed: though this charming reasoner does not convince me; for I adhere to Dr.

Clarke's account of moral virtue. How strange! that we should ever boast of knowledge, and cannot define the *moral sense!*—The third part defends revealed religion and christianity.—Perhaps I am talking to you of a book you have seen; if not I wish you had. If sound reasoning, plain yet lovely eloquence be desirable, this book is to be desired. —to make one wise, you will say: well, I understand you. I'll leave off.

As to the sermons, indeed I shall not send you a dozen. I have been plagued too much with authors myself, to be guilty of that to one whom I love: take one for yourself and be thankful: if any body else wants them, they will see where; let them send. Our family is all well:—Love to Mrs.——— and everybody yours.

R. Robinson.

To the same.

[*No date.*]

My dear brother,

Instead of writing much, I must only tell you, that I am the *tenth* time in waiting for my wife's lying in. She reckons yet three weeks longer, but has been this last week so poorly as to keep her room: three nights I have sat up, and what with the fatigue of overseeing so great a family, where one is old, another sick, and all (as it were) past help, or not arrived at it; what with public labours, and a variety of *et ceteras,* I am now fit

to sleep on the floor: you will not omit praying for us.

I thank you for *Bellamy*: I have read, but not, (I fear) mastered the reasoning yet. In the main I admire.

You ask accounts of my reading. I had written, but missed Mr. R— last time: I hope to see him to-morrow, and write this to tell you I have lost the other letter.

Of late I have been rummaging a criticism on Mark ix, 49, which, could I have reached you, I should have consulted you upon, having been repeatedly urged by Mr. Gurney, to give him something for his Gospel Magazine, and having been asked for this critique by three friends who saw it, while it was doing: I thought it the shortest way to give it Mr. Gurney. I wish then, you would spare my idleness, and take the Gospel Magazine for September, (it comes out you know the 1st. of October,) the signature is, *Drusus:* send me word when you write what you think; let you and I indulge a noble freedom, and criticise each other. I ask this the rather, because I have by me sketches of several of the kind, on various passages: and shall send the magazine more, or none, according as they are accepted or disgraced. I protest to you I love praise: assure yourself I am irreconcileable (on those articles) to public censure. I have been a few days in London, some weeks ago. I took great pains to find your friend the printer, who wrote to me about Saurin, but do you think I could find him? Depend on my at-

tention to whatever you recommend. Out of one thing into another, I fell in with a Dutch merchant, a good man in London, who had heard Saurin, and who told me every thing about voice, gesture, &c.—Think how I was delighted with a long Dutch pipe, a mess of rich rumbo, and a tale about Saurin. It seems Saurin was soft as a gentle dew, not motionless, but not terribly agitated. Do you remember Dr. Somebody, I have forgot who. Some of our preachers, says he, heave their shoulders, raise their arms, spread them a kimbo, rise to tiptoe, heave their breath, and come bang on the cushion, as they would on the head of a bull!—Forgive all this: what am I to do to-morrow? Lord's supper day, &c. &c. O! my good God, equal my strength to my day! Tenderest love to the dear partner of your sweets and sours. We kiss the dear children. Heaven preserve them for your comfort. When will you come?

Yours ever,

R. Robinson.

To the same.

Hauxton, Sep. 19, 1772.

My dear sir,

As you intended dining at the Dr's. on Monday, when you left us, I took it for granted that you would spend the afternoon at Mr. R's. Thither (you know) I was not invited: to have intruded would have been impertinence; to have loitered

elsewhere when you was there, would have looked like disrespect: to me the prudentest measure appeared—absence, though it was with much regret: the spirits of some bigots, as well as that of the mean tool of their tempers, renders it next to impossible for any body to maintain a brotherly intercourse with both; the price of the favour of that side, is affronting this: blessed be God, I have not so learned Christ; nor ever design it.

As to my wife, she has been so bad that we were obliged to fetch a physician from Cambridge at midnight; he came, prescribed, and through mercy, removed a complaint, which had it remained, must have terminated her days. She is better, the complaint removed, and we hope in a fair way of recovery. I have had a fine week you must think: nurses, helps, &c. to the number of 17 or 19 in a day with my own family: and I, poor I, all day forced to find eyes and feet, and thought for all. Farewell. I have no thoughts of coming at present. Love to the dear woman and bairns.

Yours &c.

R Robinson.

To his daughters, written on a Journey.

Tidswell, Aug. 2d, 1780.

O Patty! could a wish have transported you all hither, we certainly should have fetched you, and you would have thought yourselves sometimes in paradise, and sometimes at that part of the

world, where the curse fell heaviest at the fall of Adam. However, to proceed regularly. We left Derby on Saturday, July 29—took a transient view of Lord Scarsdale's beautiful house and park at Kedlestone—dined at Brailsford—and lodged at Ashborne—17 miles from Derby this way. This is a pretty market town in a valley surrounded by steep hills, all intersected with hedges, and laid out in pasture, corn, &c. The descent into the town is romantick, for you round a steep hill in a deep hollow road, each side rising in enormous piles of stone, the tops covered with trees, the sides spouting out springs from between the layers of stone, at bottom a pretty river, which you cross by a stone bridge to the town. We were exceedingly well accommodated at the Black Moor's Head, the master the finest person we ever saw, the mistress the size of Mrs. — —. Here we staid the Lord's day, and heard a grave old gentleman preach at the meeting, to about forty well-dressed people, a rational sermon about the gospel's being a provision for virtuous, honest hearted persons: but what comes of poor abandoned *sinners* in this plan? There was no meeting in the afternoon. I did not make myself known, for I found at Oxford I could not get through my journey if I did. I preached to such multitudes, and so often, and heated myself so much, that I got violent colds, and was very ill two or three days: so I rather disguised myself—my light clothes—white stockings—scratch wig—and a round beaver hat bound, and a band and buckle, pretty well

serve my purpose. Monday, July 30th. we sat forward about five miles to see the gardens of — Porte, Esq. at Ilam, Staffordshire. — Ilam is the most beautiful little spot that ever eyes beheld. Imagine a small vale surrounded by steep hills, covered with timber from the bottom to the top, a fine perpendicular wood, rising tree over tree to an immense height, so that nothing but trees can be seen, hares lopeing about the bottom, and squirrels cracking nuts on the boughs. On one side at the bottom rolls a broad, shallow, fine river, on the other is a pleasant shady walk, the middle is a fine flat meadow. There is one walk which winds up among the trees in the rocky cliff; at some places you see the river roll at a prodigious depth below, at others, you only hear it roar as it tumbles over the rocks. Under the rock in the garden two rivers rise, which boil up here, having run under ground, the one five miles, the other eight. The whole is an inimitable scene. The rest of the garden is laid out in shrubs, flowers, &c. and ornamented as usual. From hence we proceeded to Dove-dale in Derbyshire again, about a mile from Ilam. Here the river Dove runs in a deep narrow winding glen, for about two miles; on each side rise exceeding high hills and rocks, at places naked like old steeples, and at places covered with shrubs and woods, cows and sheep climbing and grazing. Some of us walked below by the river side, some climbed the rocks. Our guide led us to a pit of red ochre, where we scraped for Derbyshire diamonds. At

places fragments of rocks, having tumbled into the river, form a sort of little islands, on which grass and bushes grow in a manner truly picturesque. We returned to Ashborne to dinner, and in the evening went forward to Matlock bath, eleven miles. From Ashborne to Matlock is an incomparable fine ride; the road lies over steep hills, and runs through deep vallies; consequently the eye surveys astonishing sweeps of prospects, dotted, spangled, and studded as it were, with here a brown rock, there a deep green grove, yonder a silver stream, purling in the valley, or foaming over the rocks. Houses of stone, green hedges, fine pastures, rich corn fields, and good roads go to make up this delicious scene; all round the black hills of the peak skirting the view, and rising in dreadful grandeur up to the clouds, a sulky cloud here and there hanging on their tops. The houses here are all stone, the cottages stone and thin thatch, many of them without mortar, the cattle fat and fine. You see but few people, but they are plump, content and civil. I expect Mr. A—who has established a manufactory for carding and spinning cotton by engines, worked by a water wheel. This man has almost built a town at Cromford, but the surly bear, lest we should steal his trade, would not let us see the manufactory. Cromford is one mile before you come to Matlock bath. There are two large spacious inns at the bath, filled with company all the summer, who come for the sake of drinking and bathing in the warm water. They eat and drink all

at one table, and mix together in a jovial manner. It was a great favour and contrary to the rules of the house, that we had rooms and beds to ourselves. These public water-places are too frequently odious assemblies, of the sick and the dissipated, the gay and the miserable, who contrive to murther time and waste life and money, in rounds of vice, covered with a handsome pretence of drinking and bathing to preserve health. At Matlock, Buxton and Bristol-hot-wells, a second sort of gentry imitate the nobility at Bath. I shall begin the next letter presently, and send them when I can.

R. R.

Tideswell, Aug. 3d. 1780.

DEAR HETTY,

I am afraid to attempt to describe Matlock, the whole is so different from all we have seen and so inexpressibly elegant, that I doubt whether I can give you any just idea of it. The road descending from a steep hill at Cromford, runs along a narrow valley, on one side perpendicular rocks, like streets of lofty ragged church steeples, the other side high hills, gently sloping down to the road, all covered with grass. The Bath-inn, at which we lodge, stands on a hill on the grassy side, behind it garden rises over garden, one shrubbery over another, woods and pastures over all; before it is the road, and a grass flat, about as wide as from our house to the river; at the end of the flat you look down a precipice covered with small ash

trees, thick and dark, shelving down to the river Derwent, cross which, on the opposite side, huge perpendicular rocks rise, all covered with wood, the ragged rock-points peeping from between the trees; at the top are rich pastures, and here and there you see a cow browzing on the herbage, or lying as easy as she would in Barnwell grove. At some places waters fall in gentle cascades; at others they tumble from ridge to ridge, and come roaring down the rocks, flouncing into the river. The rocks at some places are one hundred and fifty feet high, at others four hundred, at one five hundred. Some of them are bare, some crowned with wood, some just covered with herbage, or moss, or a single shrub. The shades of green are innumerable, from the brightest tint to the darkest gloom, the water at places like silver sparkling through the boughs. This magnificent scene winds through a valley, three miles long. It is allowed to be the most finished natural beauty in the kingdom. We left it after breakfast, after having bought a stone-horn for my grandmother to drink out of, a spar inkstand for Mr. Curtis, and a hen's egg, without either yolk or white, for we do not know who. Here we went a little way into a lead mine. Remind me when I return of the marble-mason's shop. Now for the wonders of the Peak. From Matlock we went eleven miles to *Chatsworth*, and saw the magnificent seat of his Grace the Duke of Devonshire. This noble palace stands in a fine park, ornamented with rivers, cascades, fountains, clump hills, woods and all that

you can conceive grand and august, and the *wonder* is, that all this superb scene should be found in the black mountains of the Peak, for they say, you may ride seventeen miles farther without seeing hedge, house, or tree. I must tell you particulars at my return, for the whole would fill a volume. Here, at more than one hundred and fifty miles from London, my father found a man named Pleasance, a servant of the Duke who lived formerly at Lord Godolphin's, and sends his love to Dr. Dennis. Here we dined and drank tea, and proceeded to *Tideswell* on Tuesday, Aug. 1st. where we lodged. The *second wonder* of the Peak was here formerly; it was a small well that ebbed and flowed like the sea, but it is now destroyed. This is a small market town, houses, fences, roads, every thing stone. Part of the road from Chatsworth hither, runs through a narrow valley between prodigious rocks of lime stone, among which are many kilns burning lime. Yesterday morning we set forward for Castleton, seven miles, to see the cavern there usually called *the Devil's A—*, and a wonderful *A—* it is! It is a large opening in the steep side of a mountain, thirty feet high and sixty broad at bottom, in the form of an arch. There are some cottages in the mouth of the cavern, the people were spinning hemp, and the smoak of their chimnies has pretty well blacked Sir *Boggy's* bottom. We stooped at places, and at places walked upright, till we came at a water which crosses the cave, but the ladies not daring to enter the boat, we returned having

first heard a fine song, with which a choir of jolly fellows make the cavern resound. From hence we proceeded to *Mam Tor*, about a mile further. This is the highest mountain in this country. The inhabitants call it the shivering mountain, because after rains and frosts, one side of it being crumbling loose earth, tumbles into the plain. John and I went with the guide up to the top, where Omiah went mad at looking down the precipice; and dreadful it is indeed. On a sloping side of this enormous mountain, we set down on the grass, and dined on a fine piece of cold roast beef and a bottle of good red port, mixing some with the water of a cold crystal spring just by. The day was fine, the breeze was cool and pleasant, the cows lay about on the tops of the rocks, the sheep climbing and grazing, looked like little moving pebble stones, the busy world seemed dead to us and we to it. Hence we proceeded two miles further to Elden Hole, a frightful chasm of twenty feet one way, and sixty feet the other, going down perpendicular into the earth. They have let down nearly a mile's length of line, but could never fathom it. About two miles from this place we stopped ten minutes to taste some village beer, where the miners were jovially holding a wake. They took my father for a Scotch Lord: however, supposing him a patriotic peer, related to their patron the Duke of Devonshire, they drank his health by the title of Lord Lothian, carried beer to the ladies, and sung a jovial song about "Scotch lords on English ground fighting a battle for seven good thou-

sand pounds." He could not convince these brutes, though he was forced to treat them; they swore his face was right honourable, for one of their women declared so. From hence we proceeded five miles to *Buxton*, where we saw abundance of fine folks, drank of the hot wells, viewed the baths, went into *Poole's hole*, and returned over high hills and frightful precipices, sometimes on foot, and sometimes in the carriages to our good hostess at Tideswell, where after supper we retired to bed most heartily weary. This morning we are all well, but stiff and tired. We have seen this wonderful country, and shall now proceed with all expedition through Yorkshire to the North. We have travelled three hundred and sixty six miles.

R. R.

Aug. 18th. 1780.

Now, my Kit, it is your turn to have a letter; and, as I cannot reach you to kiss you, as I used to do all your sisters when they were little, I must e'en write to you, for I cannot make you hear me if I speak. What a charming art is that of *writing*: pray learn to *write* as soon as you can, Somebody had written upon the window of my room at Newcastle—"Miss Kitty is charming and pretty." What do you think made this Northumberland Kitty charming? Why her charming *behaviour* to be sure. Pray do you practice *good manners*.

But beside learning to write and behave pretty, learn also to *spell*, and to write *good sense*. Somebody had written under the above line, "Miss "Peggee Cradock is *ditto*." The writer, you see, could not spell Peggy, and had he been a gentleman he would not have written *ditto*, for that is the language of a shopkeeper. Let me tell you two or three little tales, which you may tell others. Tell your mother to bless herself that she was not in my bed the other night at Whitby, for in the room under me, about twelve at night, some drunken soldiers set out all on a sudden a singing and dancing with a drum and a hurdy-gurdy; my door flew open, my chimney-board tumbled, and knocked down my candlestick, put out the candle, broke the wash-hand-bason, and made me jump out of bed. I rung my bell, and the landlord sent them all to bed directly: but is not drunkenness a troublesome thing? Tell your grandmother, as I was coming out of the inn at Durham, an old beggar intreated me to relieve her because she was an old woman. I told her, that was no argument to me; but if she would go to the young lady getting into the coach, she would become an old woman herself in time, and the plea might move her. Miss C—— felt this, and gave her something. Assure your grandmother that you will behave well to all old women, particularly to *Ousden* and *Crab*, because you will be an old woman yourself by and by. Tell Mr. Knott, that the people in the North have not cut all their grass yet, and their corn is very fine, but quite green.

Tell Mr. Curtis, that the fellow who shewed us Durham Cathedral was so drunk, that when I asked him who the little stone images round a tomb were, the heads of which Oliver Cromwell had knocked all off, he replied, they were the *monk's* children. He had forgot that monks were never married. Tell Elly, that the same genius pointed to a crack in the spire on the top, and assured Miss C——, that a dun cow got her foot in, and could not get it out till the bishop said the Lord's prayer backward. Is not he a fool who pretends to describe what he does not understand? Tell Nanny, that we travelled six hundred and eight miles, and have seen abundance of things, but then we have spent about one hundred and ten pounds, so that every body cannot travel, if they would. Content at home, is a frugal virtue. Tell Patty, that a little dog in a wheel, like your ringing cage, roasted my dinner yesterday at Morpeth. That little dog deserved the bones. Tell Het, that the Derbyshire folks say "ye toir and "fateeg ye," instead of you tire and fatigue yourself. The Yorkshire folks say "chirch yaard is "note but mook," for the church yard is nothing but muck. Tell her the Northumbrians say "hoot of thee," for root of tree, for they cannot pronounce the *r*. Tell Pol, that little fat boys and girls divert themselves by climbing up steep hills and cliffs, and rolling and sliding down lump, lump, from cliff to cliff; but then they have neither shoes nor stockings, they graze their bottoms, and sometimes break their necks. Tell Julia, that the

roads are so dusty, and the weather so hot, that some days in inclosed places, we have not all pleasure in travelling; some of the dust is black, some red, some buff, and some white. I think the road between Stockton and Gisborough, is mended with rub-stones; with the stone rubs are made of; and these ground to powder are smothering. Now I have told you a deal of little prattle, perhaps I may hereafter tell you something more considerable. Give my love to all, and tell them I long to be at home, and will do all I can to get at rest. Good bye Miss Kit, good bye.

R. Robinson.

Glasgow, Aug. 21st. 1780.

Dear H.

We staid at Edinburgh from Monday till Thursday, and should have staid longer could we have reconciled ourselves to nastiness. The country, however, is improving in every thing, but it is at present in a state of childhood. Indeed the stench of some of the streets and lanes, which they call *wynds*, is intolerable. Edinburgh is naturally divided into two parts, the old town and the new. The high street of the old town, for length, width, and height of houses, is said to be the finest in Europe. Here we saw houses from ten to fourteen stories high. No house is occupied by any one family, but each floor, which is called a *land*,

is equivalent to a house in our country, and lets and sells independently on the rest. You ascend to all these by one common stone staircase, which winds round like the steps of a steeple. It is called here a *turnpike.* The houses were built so high at first, for the sake of piling the inhabitants under the protection of the castle; and, though this reason has ceased, yet it would ruin proprietors to lower them, for it would annihilate their estates. To the height of the houses, the nastiness is owing, for as upper floors have no right to cut through lower ones, all dirt must come down by staircase or windows, and both are dirty. The new town consists of handsome streets and squares, laid out in the English fashion, and will be very noble when finished; but there is in all a certain dirtiness disagreeable to us; add to which, the streets are filled with a multitude of loose clad, dirty people, without shoes, stockings, stays, or hats. We had not the pleasure of seeing my good old uncle; he dropped down as he was walking from his house in the country to town, and expired suddenly. His son was in transports to see us, and did every thing in his power to make our stay long and pleasant. He has been a widower four years, he has no children, and his family consists of himself, Miss Blythe, his wife's sister, and one maid servant. He was, for sometime, comptroller of the excise office, with a salary of six hundred pounds a year, for himself and clerks, but Lord North lately removed him, to make way for the son of a noble family, whose political influence he wanted. He

is, however, in the office, and has an easy income. We saw Holyrood house, which is all going to decay, the grass grows in the courts, the pictures are torn and defaced, the rooms are, many of them, dirty and unfurnished, the chapel is tumbled in, and we crept into some of the vaults to handle the bones of Darnley, James V. and others of their rank. The Duke of Hamilton occupies a few rooms of this old palace. We breakfasted one morning with professor *Robertson*, who shew us every thing in the university worth seeing. We handled the thin skull of Buchanan, and the thick skull of an idiot. We saw the original protest of the Bohemian Lords, against the council of Constance, for burning John Huss, with all their names and seals appending. The professor shew us a curious bracelet with a small seal, on which were engraved the hundred eastern names of God, and also the whole Koran, which usually makes a quarto book of near six hundred pages, written on a vellum ribbon so small that the whole was rolled up and drawn through our cousin's ring. The botanical garden, the medical collection of Dr. Monro, the noble port of Leith, and twenty more curious things, must make a Christmas tale at home. We hurried away on Thursday noon, twelve miles to Midcalder, where we found an excellent inn, with good accommodations, surrounded with pleasant gardens, hanging woods, rocks, hills, valleys, corn, cattle, rivers, and every thing that could render a place delicious. We highly enjoyed this, yet even this was a little tainted with Scotch sluttery;

but we did not mind a little, for we came from Edinburgh. The old reprobate, who kept this house, was a man of great wit and humour, and having got pretty drunk with a Scotch Earl, would spend an hour with us, in which he amused us prodigiously. He was very fond too, of the young squire, and gathered me fruit, and brought cakes and syllabub in abundance. He lamented that he had *na cheeld*, and made me kiss the little son of one of his postillions, of whom he was very fond. *Gee um*, said he, *twaw baubee to bee um a buskit;* that is, give him a penny to buy him a biscuit. The old man's head had been terribly hacked in fighting for Charley, against king George. He deserved it, for he killed in one day twelve of the king's men; yet this old rebel, who owed his life wholly to the king's mercy, execrates the Americans for rising up against their sovereign lord the king! After breakfast, on Friday morning, we proceeded to Holytown, twenty miles, where we dined. We alighted at the kirk of Shots, so famous in church history for the plentiful effusion of the spirit, which we read of in the history written by Mr. Gillies. In the evening we arrived at Glasgow, and are lodged in a private house, adjoining the inn, the inn itself being full. We have a whole *land*, that is, up three pair of stairs, a dining room, three bed rooms, and a kitchin, with Nelly Drummond, a bare-footed Highland lass, to wait on us.

Farewell,

R. R.

Sanquhar, Aug. 22d. 1780.

Dear Nancy,

Glasgow is called the second city in Scotland, but in our opinion it is the first. It is a noble city, spreading over a plain in stately well built houses of stone, covered with blue slate. The principal streets are four, which cross one another at right angles, and are broad, strait, well paved, and very populous. The first story, in many parts, projects over the flat pavement, and rests on vast square pillars, so that you walk along under piazzas, into which the shops open. The river Clyde runs on the western side of the town, and is navigable by small vessels; there is a handsome stone bridge over it, with seven arches. The college, or university, consists of several courts, not unlike our Pembroke college; the library is far superior to that at Edinburgh. The old cathedral is converted, as that at Edinburgh is, into three preaching places, called Kirks, but the division walls are so thick, that the people's singing is no interruption to one another. We went on the Lord's day morning and heard a sermon on death, in the new church, which is a very noble building, and was pretty well filled, for the Scotch have far more of the face of religion than the English, and their Kirks are full on the Lord's day. In the afternoon we went to the college Kirk, hoping to hear the famous old Mr. Gillies,

but he was gone a journey. This is a large, old, circular building, with deep galleries, and it was so crouded with an innumerable multitude of people, that it was a favour to get a seat. It was very hot, but we did not see one fan in the place. Every one had a bible and psalm book, and all seemed deeply affected with the sermon. The preacher was a Mr. Finlay, it was only his third public sermon. Indeed it was heaven to be there. We should have gone on Saturday to see the manufactory of threads, lawns, silk, gauzes, and ribbands, at Paisley, eight miles from Glasgow, but we could not get chaises. Tobacco is the great mercantile article at Glasgow. They have imported before the present war, above fifty thousand hogsheads a year. Here we hoped to have got some good tobacco, but we were disappointed. The Scotch smoak very little; in large towns we are sometimes troubled to get a pipe; seldom get any tobacco but coarse stalks, and sometimes only the leaf. We quitted Glasgow at seven yesterday morning, and passed through a most delightful country, in high cultivation, full of coal-pits and stone quarries, through Cathcart in Renfrewshire, and Kingswell in Airshire, to Kilmarnock, where, at an exceeding good inn, we dined. Airshire is in general, the most pleasent county in Scotland. The soil is a light red earth, pretty deep, of which they make a large brick for building. Underneath are vast quarries of red and grey stone, with which also, they build and make

fences, roads, bridges, and so on. The lands lie in fine hills and valleys, divided, inclosed, planted with hedges and trees, cropped with potatoes, cabbages, or something of the kind. These pendant slopes look very pretty. Rivers and rivulets run in deep dells: cottages and houses scattered about, compleat the beautiful scenery. Kilmarnock is a pretty sized town, situated in a romantic manner. It has a manufactory of carpets, blankets, and stockings. The Seceders or Scotch Nonconformists, have a Kirk here, and had we been a little sooner, we should have heard a sermon abroad, for they had come from many parts to have a sacrament here the day before, and were just departing from a thanksgiving sermon, always preached on the Monday after. My father paid his respects to the heads of them, and wished them God-speed, and they blessed him in return. The town and the road was filled with them; they made a very decent appearance, but some things appeared very odd to us. Most of the men wore the blue Scotch bonnet, and the plaid cloak, greens, reds, and various stripes thrown over the shoulder. The good women took off their shoes and stockings, when they came out of the assembly, and pulling up their petticoats, tied them in a sort of pucker or gather, just under the knee, and so trudged barefooted home. We had a fine ride to Cumnock, sixteen miles, where we intended to lodge, but the inn being full, we were forced to go on to Sanquhar, eighteen miles. We arrived at ten, very tired, but were very well accommodated. It is now noon,

and we are going to Drumlanrig. We have not seen a drop of rain since we left London, till last Lord's day at Glasgow. Good bye, we are just going.

Dumfries, Aug. 23d. 1780.

Dear Nancy,

Before we left Sanquhar, which is a neat little town, we looked at a stocking manufactory. Here we saw a load of coals, about half a ton weight, laid in for ten-pence. We set forward about one. No day ever afforded a greater variety of entertainment. The first six miles, the road runs through a country, so fine that Italy itself cannot exceed it. It would be rash to attempt to describe it, for, the scene varying every stone's cast would baffle the skill of the finest pencil. On the left hand of the road, rise suddenly, prodigious hills, clothed up to the top with oak, ash, birch, and shrubs of various kinds. On the right hand side, a gentle slope, covered also with trees, descends into a deep dell, at the bottom of which runs a broad, shallow stream, at places sleeping, as it were, upon beds of sand, at others playing, loitering, and curling about the loose rocky stones, at other places again hurrying away, and presently foaming and frothing down a cascade as if in a passion. Seen through the trees, when the sun shines, the whole looks like green needle-work, on a silver

ground. From the bottom of the stream, hills rise, covered with trees to a great height, and over them other hills again covered with sheep and black cattle, which seemed to us like beds of mushrooms and bulfists. Thus we rode in paradise, for several miles. We proceeded to Drumlanrig, an old seat of his Grace the Duke of Queensbury. You turn out of the road over a stone bridge, and drive along a winding road, shaded with beech trees, which are planted in rows on each side, the frisky squirrels sitting on the branches, cracking the beech mast. This noble old palace afforded us a higher entertainment than any we have seen, and yet, it lies, upon the whole, sadly neglected, the grass grows between the stones in the courts, and gates, fences, garden, statues, water-falls, all proclaim that his Grace, their master, lives in London. I will try to give you one view of the place. From a window, in the picture gallery, the eye surveys an immense track of land, the nearer parts laid out in lawns, slopes, terraces, clumps of trees, walks, groves, and waters; the more remote, woods, heaths, arable and grass grounds, the whole bounded by huge, frowning hills, night-capped with great, dark, sulky black clouds. What a pity this fine spot is not improved, for, it has every thing to render it a perfect beauty! The soil is a fine earth as red as brick-dust, the hills are immense piles of red and grey stone, some of them of coals; waters run in rich abundance, and woods rise over woods, in grand luxuriance, yet, here is not a house at

Drumlanrig that can give you a dinner. We rode forward to Thornhill, a pretty little town, three miles further. Here, a great concourse of people were keeping a fair. The inn, (there is but one) was so full, that we could not get a room; however, we got the use of a neighbouring cottage, and there the inn-keeper sent us a quarter of roast lamb, a couple of broiled fowls, currant tarts, Cheshire cheese, ale, porter, port wine, good bread, and Scotch bannock, that is oat cakes, as thin, and as broad, and as round, as a woman's straw hat. We dined deliciously. This fair was made up of plain, decent people, mostly free from drinking, rioting, and such like disgraces of English fairs. We saw in the woman's cottage, the form and the furniture of a poor Scotch house. The walls are of stone, the roof of thatch, very thin, and laced on tight and neat: there are a few spars of square stuff, and boughs and rough poles serve cross-ways instead of lath, the chamber is boarded, and you ascend it by a ladder. There is no floor but the earth, a peat fire was upon the hearth, and the chimney was no higher than the roof of the house. There are two rooms below, each the size of our compting-house, there was a bed in one, in a sort of press, with shutters in the front, that run in a groove. In the other room, which was let to a man-lodger, there was a bed of turf, that is, thin grassy flags of earth, dry, lying one upon another, about three feet high, covered with a blanket and coverlid. Before the door was a stack of peat firing, and just by it an open well, to which you

descend by a dozen or fifteen steep stone steps. Each low room has a little window of four small sash squares. The whole lets for thirty shillings. In the evening we proceeded eighteen miles to Dumfries, a large good town, situated on the river Nith, about six miles from the Irish sea. Mrs. C—— is so fatigued that we are obliged to lie still to day, so I shall finish my letter elsewhere.

Farewell.

Dumfries, Aug. 24th. 1780.

Mrs. C—— is better, so we hope to go forward to-day. Yesterday was market day here; there are two in a week. The finest fresh salmon a penny a pound, fresh herrings from five to twelve a penny. We supped on some, which are called *Manks*, because they are brought in little ships from the isle of Man. They throw into the ship a layer of fish and a layer of salt, to preserve them, yet they come fresh to market. A side of lamb sold for one shilling and sixpence. Beef was about four-pence, all other things in proportion. This is a prodigious market for black cattle. The Shire of Galloway alone, sells here seven or eight thousand annually. They and the sheep, live upon the mountains. The people here almost all wear long cloaks, which they call plaids; even the drovers sell cattle in them, and the bricklayers' labourers return from work in them. The bricklayers here are as red as ours are white, for

they work most in this country red stone: houses, steps, stairs, hearths, chimney-pieces, are all made with it. The river here is so shallow, when the tide is out, that boys run in, and with a sort of three tined folk, kill salmon and trout of eight or ten pound weight. When the tide comes in it brings up ships of fifty or sixty tons. Rivers here are not like ours, muddy, but all stones at the bottom, for in wet seasons the great cataracts that come down from the mountains, carry away every thing portable. There are no rings of bells in Scotland; steeples they have none, their town-halls have spires upon some of them, the kirks have only one bell, which is sufficient to call the people together. The dress of the Highland soldiers is odd. Their stockings are of broad, red and white stripes, twisted in a sort of serpentine fashion. They come up a little higher than the calf; from thence to a good handful above the knee they are naked. They wear no breeches, but instead of them, a short petticoat of broad striped green and blue plaid, gathered full; over this right before, hangs a bag, ornamented with white tassels. The waistcoat is buff colour, over which they wear a scarlet jacket, and over all, a plaid cloak, like their petticoat, which in fine weather, is rolled up, and hangs from the top of their right shoulder, cross to the left hip, in the fashion of a sash. We shall get into England to-day or to-morrow, and then we shall send you word where to write to us.

R. R.

To Mrs. Robinson.

Penrith, Aug. 28th. 1780.

My Dear,

Though we have troubled you with so many letters, and many of them extra, yet I cannot omit congratulating you, as well as ourselves, on our safe arrival in Old England again, and consequently our nearer prospect of home. We left Dumfries on Thursday, the 24th. inst. and travelled eighteen miles through a flat country, with little cultivation, and little business, except peat-digging and lime-burning, to Annan. This is a pretty little town, the chief of Annandale. It has a small trade in corn and wine, and is pleasant enough. Here is a singularity we never saw before. The great building, at the upper end of the street, is divided into two parts, the one is the parish kirk, the other the jail: an odd association! In the evening we supped partly upon some delicious salmon fry, which Robert caught in the river after dinner. Next day, we proceeded to Gretna-green, eight miles, the last town in Scotland this way. We rode along side the Solway firth, over which lay Galloway in full view. Galloway affords us small horses in plenty, and seven or eight thousand head of black cattle. The town is mostly composed of miserable little huts, the worst we saw in Scotland, they are made of red clay, without windows; the smoak gets out either at the door or at a hole under the roof, and in some at a hole in the roof, called a chimney. The roof is a few

rough spars covered with turf. We peeped into the school house, where a master was teaching twenty or thirty children: but it is not to be described, no hogstye in Chesterton is so wretched. The kirk, like others, into which we peeped, is a vile hole, worse than a barn. It is, indeed, built of stone, and covered with slate; but the roof is not ceiled, nor is any thing done to the inside of it. There is no floor but the earth, and in this lay some straw to keep the people's feet warm I suppose. There is little light, and much dirt, a pulpit, a seat for the clerk, a round pew at the foot of the pew for the elders, and benches with backs for the people, with a sort of gallery for the squire. At the side of the pulpit, where our sconces are, is a swinging iron, in which the bason is put at what they call baptisms. This is the famous town where so many marriages have been celebrated. We stopped only half an hour, and then proceeded to Carlisle, twelve miles further. We entered England, by passing a little rivulet, about half past two on Friday, about eleven miles from Carlisle. This is a pretty little city, situated in a fine plain, well watered by three rivers. The castle is in ruins. The cathedral seems to be only one end of the original building, and one end of this serves for a parish church, and a very ordinary one it is. The scenes have painted on them in several pannels, the legendary tales of St. Anthony and St. Augustin. There stands the devil tempting St. Austin, in the shape of a man, with a huge bull's head, and a long, long tail. Un-

der each pannel is an old monkish rhyme, partly Scotch, partly English. Anthony and his devils are fitter for a bawdy house than a cathedral, though some say a cathedral is the house of a w——e. We had the pleasure on Saturday morning, of seeing Carlisle fair, a large crowded fair it is, yet all the black cattle folks, and all the clean good women selling their home-spun pieces of linen and woollen cloth, and all the fish—flesh—fruit—green—toy—folks, &c. did not make so much noise as one fellow upon a cart, who had a calf with two heads to shew. The cattle fair is kept without the Scotch gate, the rest of the fair within the gates of the city. The pigs are all brought alive in carts, covered with cloths, and taken out one by one, as they are wanted for sale. We left Carlisle about noon, and proceeded to High Hesketh, where we eat an egg, and drank some rum and water, in a shady close behind the church, and in full sight of a Cumberland lake, from which we proceeded to Penrith, where we dined, and staid the Lord's day. We went to meeting, and heard that cold, killing preaching which they call *rational* dissenting, yet, as the scriptures were read, and the true God worshiped without superstitious rites, we would not go nigh old *Bab*, otherwise she has a pretty church here of red stone, and large windows, &c. We proceed to day for Keswick, and so on, I know not where, but I am happy to think every step homeward. I hope to be at home by Lord's day se'nnight, the 10th of September, but I doubt

it for certain ; if nothing unforeseen prevents, I shall get home the 13th. or 14th. of September, but I wish you would only say you expect me to preach at Cambridge, on the 17th. or 24th. at farthest, the 17th. most likely. I wish nobody might know of my return for the two or three first days of my being at home, for I am so full of riding, and staring, that rest would be a kingdom to me. Bob does not want to come home he says. He likes his life and enjoys himself wonderfully. I fancy, if you write without delay, the next post after this reaches you, you may direct to Mr. Robinson, of Chesterton, to lie till called for at the post house, Worcester: a letter may reach me.

Farewell—love to all

R. Robinson.

To his daughters.

Kendal, Aug. 31. 1780.

Dear Hetty,

My last left off at Penrith, and there I begin. I and Robert walked out in the evening of the Lord's day for a little air, and by degrees, mounted the huge red stone hill, from which the town takes its name. Penrith in the old British is *red rock* or *red hill.* On the top of this steep hill stands a beacon house, which commands a prospect of one hundred miles in circumference, every where bounded by rocks and mountains of stu-

pendous size. At our return Miss C——— had been not well, and Mrs. C———, running to get something for her, had fallen down five or six stairs and bruised herself; however next morning both were better and we proceeded on our journey. The road was exceeding good, but it lay all among hills and mountains, the chaises, crawling up one side of a hill and trickling down the other brought us to Penruddock, six miles, where we stopped a little while, and then proceeded, winding in among the grey mountains, till we were wholly surrounded by them, and arrived at Keswick, twelve miles from Penruddock. At this little homely village we dined, and, after dinner took boat with four rowers, and so viewed the famous lake of Derwentwater. This fine piece of water lies at the foot of several lofty perpendicular mountains, the broken crags and pendent rocks of which wholly surround it. Some of these are naked, and look like thousands of church steeples, rudely jumbled together; others are covered with moss, others again with bushes, shrubs, and timbers up to the very top; the bottoms of several are cultivated; and the variegated stripes of ripe corn, green meadows, here gently falling to the water, and there overshadowing horrible cliffs, precipices and caverns, form a landscape, that cannot be described. The water, clear as crystal, is above three miles long and one over. There are in this lake, five islands, one of about six acres is called the *Vicar's* island, and here men were digging and cutting out blue slate. The

next is called the *Lord's* island, and consists of about five acres all covered with a grove. Here we landed, and saw the ruins of a house once belonging to the earl of Derwentwater. Our guide pointing to *Wallow crag*, on the opposite side of the lake, shew us a narrow steep parting between the rock called *Lady's rake;* for up this horrid precipice Lady Derwentwater climbed, and escaped with her jewels, when her Lord was taken in rebellion. From hence we went to St *Herbert's* Island, about five acres all covered with trees. This saint flourished about the year 600, and the ruins of his stone-hermitage yet remain. Here I cut up a walking stick to bring you for a curiosity, but unluckily forgot it at one of the inns. Our boat men fired off their little brass cannon. How tremendous was the sound! peals of thunder seemed to rend the rocks all around, the crags re-echoed the roar, silence ensued, and the sounding returned like distant thunder claps, which died away upon the ear. We seemed encircled with everlasting mountains, rising one above another from one to three thousand five hundred feet above the lake. From Keswick on Tuesday morning we went forward to Ambleside in Westmoreland. The road is exceeding good, and the ride said to be one of the finest in the north of England. Nothing surely can exceed, no pencil can describe the incomparable beauty of this place. The tremendous rocks and mountains rise above the clouds on either side. We had the pleasure of seeing a great white cloud clasp, and hang, and play about

the neck of one. Innumerable cascades come purling or gushing from the sides of the mountains, and run gurgling down the rocks in to a river, far, far, beneath our feet. The slopes of the hills are laid out in ten thousand various forms; here a meadow with cattle grazing, there a piece of yellow corn waving its luxuriant head, yonder a grove, beyond it a cottage, picturesque all, and all romantic and enchanting. We stopped a little while at Wyburn, and got some refreshment, and there the clean old hostess made me write a Cumberland rhyme.

> Helvellan, and Catchettycam,
> Cawsey pike, and Skiddow mam,
> Are the four highest mountains,
> That ever man *clam*.

That is, that ever man climbed. Helvellan, on which we saw the cloud, is eleven yards higher than Skiddow. Hence we went on to Ambleside, feasting our eyes all the way. The whole ride is eighteen miles. After dinner at this little town, we went about a mile, in a narrow winding path, up a woody hill, along the side of a river, which seemed at once to roll over our heads and tumble beneath our feet. At length we arrived at a cliff, where we saw, about an hundred yards above us the river come roaring out of the rocks, and tumbling into a gulph about sixty yards beneath us, whence it rolled through a deep and dreary dell, from crag to crag, through thickets of oak, beech, birch, holly and hazel with a tremendous sound.

through the town of Ambleside, fretting and foaming all the way over the black rock stones. I was so enchanted with this scene, that we could not get away till the next day.

R. R.

Warrington, Sept. 3d. 1780.

Dear Polly,

We quitted the industrious town of Kendal on Friday, and dined at Burton, the last town in Westmoreland, this way, whence we proceeded to Lancaster, where we drank tea, and should have staid all night, had not the house been under the management of a slut. This journey has taught us the inexpressible value of cleanly women, for how much they contribute to the comfort of travellers, none but travellers can tell. This country town has much commerce in corn, candles, sail-cloth, and cabinet goods. The river Lune brings up ships of two hundred and fifty tons to the quays. We went from hence to Garstang, thirty five miles from Kendal, where we lodged at a very clean house. Saturday morning we proceeded to the fine and populous town of Preston, usually called *Proud* Preston, and mostly inhabited by gentlemen, attorneys, proctors, notaries, and manufacterers. It was fair day; we walked about and saw plenty of every thing, particularly fustians, linen and woollen cloths, and coals. Hence we went to Chorley, a pretty little market town, where we dined. We

proceeded to Wigan, famous for cheques, cotton, iron, and pit coal, particularly cannel coal, which are as black as the deepest jet, and polished like alabaster, Miss C—— bought a few cannel coal snuff-boxes here. From hence we went to Warrington, a very large and populous manufacturing town, full of linen and lace weavers, glass houses, copper-works, sugar houses, maltings, pin manufactories, slitting mills, gun powder mills, and paper mills. Here is a large charity school, founded by a Mr. Waterson, with money which he acquired by shewing a dancing horse for a penny a piece. We travelled yesterday forty two miles, and were very tired, for the roads here, both foot-paths and coach roads, are paved with pebbles, and are very rough and unpleasant to travel. We have travelled upwards of a thousand miles, and wish to be at home. We have crossed all Lancashire, often in sight of the western ocean. It is really a very fine county, and the soil is rich, the lands inclosed, the pastures fruitful and pleasant, corn plentiful and fine, most of it abroad, and some of it green. Rain, I believe, is more frequent on this coast, than in other parts of England. The cows here are of a very fine size, and their horns particularly wide, large, and spreading. Here are twelve daily coaches from hence to Liverpool. That famous town, and Manchester, and some others are in this neighbourhood, but we are glutted with seeing and hearing, and therefore shall not visit them.

Farewell.

R. R.

Pershore, Sep. 9th. 1780.

We left Warrington on Monday, the 4th inst. after dinner, and proceeded by a bad road, to Frodsham, a small market town in Cheshire, where we drank tea. In this little ride, we passed under the Duke of Bridgewater's canal, and over the river Weaver, by a stone bridge. After tea, we went to Chester, ten miles, and lodged at the Yacht, a large and commodious inn. This beautiful old city is built on a hill, walled in. There is a charming walk on the wall, near two miles right round the city, from which you have an elegant prospect of all the surrounding country. The city is said to contain about twenty thousand inhabitants. Before all the houses, in many streets, there are long galleries up one pair of stairs, where you walk dry in all weathers. Many shops are below these galleries, and many in them. The cathedral is an old building; the greatest oddity in it, is the carving in the choir; in the same stall you see plump archangels, old patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, nuns with their veils, and a sow with her pigs. The bishop's throne is surrounded with the images of kings, queens, saints, and so on. Oliver Cromwell, it seems, knocked off their heads, and so they stood about one hundred years, but lately one of the bishops had them repaired and gilt, but by a sad mistake, the artist put a king's head with a long beard, upon a queen's shoulders with petticoats, and a queen's head upon a king's shoulders, and so they stand now. It happened to be the

race time, and the Rhodee, that is the flat large meadow on the banks of the river Dee, where the horses run, was covered with company as usual. On Tuesday we went to Holywell, eighteen miles, in Flintshire, in Wales; the ride is lovely, in sight of Flint, the broad river Mersey, Liverpool, and the coast on the right, and on the left, mountains, valleys, woods, and cottages. The inn is large, and a Welchman is kept in the house to amuse the company with a large Welch harp, which stands in the stair-case, and on which he plays admirably. The town is situated on the side of a lofty hill, at the foot of which rises St. Winefrede's well, which boils up and throws off, one hundred and twenty tons of water every minute. You descend to the well by a flight of stone steps; over it is a large, covered stone arch, under which are dressing-rooms, for those who bath, and round it hang crutches in abundance, left by persons whose limbs were restored by the waters. The water falls in a broad cascade into a rich, woody valley, and within two stone's cast works, first a flour mill, then a paper mill, and then a mill for carding and spinning cotton. We were chiefly delighted with the last. We brought away two or three stones from the well, and a little of the green moss, called St. Winefrede's hair, which smells and tastes like violets. On Wednesday we went forward to Pincalondigry, dined at Mould, and lodged at Wrexham, twenty four miles. This is a large market town, in Denbighshire. It was market day, and we saw the poor Welch people selling their linens

and flannels to the factors. Thursday morning we went forward sixteen miles, a most delightful ride to Oswestry in Shropshire. a mean dirty little town, with a wall, and three old stone gateways. After dinner we went sixteen miles to Shrewsbury, where we lodged. The river Severn is the glory of this town. The situation is very fine, the town is rich, and populous, and the traffick is very large in Welch cloth, cattle, cheese, linen, and lamb's wool. We did not visit the Royal Oak, for the town was full of people electioneering, so we hastened on Friday morning to Wenlock, fourteen miles, from thence nine miles to Bridgnorth, where we dined. This pretty town consists of two parts, separated by the river Severn. It's manufacturies are chiefly guns and stockings. The great red rock rises here perpendicularly, and several houses are hewn out of it. We walked as it were, upon the tops of the chimneys. Remind me when I return of the leaning castle, the bowling-green, the cyder, the steep hill cut through the huge rock, the nuts, the lace-makers, and so on. In the evening we went fourteen miles to Kidderminster, in Worcestershire, where we lodged. This is a large populous town, situated on the river Stour, once the habitation of the famous Richard Baxter. I was so wrapped up in thought about that favourite servant of God, that I wept freely over the remembrance of him, and became dead to their carpets, and linsey-woolseys, in which the people are all employed, and I saw none of them. Saturday morning we went forward fourteen miles, to the clean

and beautiful city of Worcester, and all the way the hedge-rows are full of fruit. We visited the china manufactory, with which we were extremely delighted. It was market day, and hops were sold in abundance. We came forward in the evening to this place, ten miles.

Farewell.

R. Robinson.

HYMN I.

Praise to the Redeemer.

1.

MIGHTY GOD! while Angels praise thee,
May an infant lisp thy name?
LORD of men as well as angels,
Thou art every creature's theme.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Amen!

2.

LORD of every land and nation,
Ancient of eternal days!
Sounded through the wide creation
Be thy just and lawful praise.
Hallelujah, &c.

3.

For the grandeur of thy name,
Grand beyond a Seraph's thought,
For created works of power,
Works with skill and kindness wrought.
Hallelujah, &c.

4.

For thy Providence that governs
Through thine empire's wide domain;
Wings an angel, guides a sparrow,
Blessed be thy gentle reign.
Hallelujah, &c.

5.

But thy rich, thy free redemption,
Dark through brightness all along;
Thought is poor, and poor expression,
Who dare sing that awful song?
Hallelujah, &c.

6.

Brightness of the Father's glory,
Shall thy praise unutter'd lie?
Fly my tongue such guilty silence!
Sing the LORD who came to die.
Hallelujah, &c.

7.

Did Archangels sing thy coming?
Did the shepherds learn their lays?
Shame would cover me ungrateful,
Should my tongue refuse to praise.
Hallelujah, &c.

8.

From the highest throne in glory,
To the cross of deepest woe;
All to ransom guilty captives!
Flow my praise, for ever flow.
Hallelujah, &c.

9.

Go return, immortal Saviour,
Leave thy footstool, take thy throne;
Thence return, and reign for ever,
Be the kingdom all thy own.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Amen!

HYMN II.

Grateful Recollection.

1.

COME, thou fount of every blessing,
Tune my heart to sing thy grace!
Streams of mercy never ceasing,
Call for songs of loudest praise:
Teach me some melodious sonnet,
Sung by flaming tongues above:
Praise the mount—O fix me on it,
Mount of GOD's unchanging love.

2.

Here I raise my Ebenezer,
Hither by thy help I'm come;
And I hope by thy good pleasure,
Safely to arrive at home:
JESUS sought me when a stranger
Wandering from the fold of GOD;
He to save my soul from danger
Interpos'd with precious blood.

3.

O! to grace how great a debtor,
Daily I'm constrain'd to be!
Let that grace, LORD, like a fetter,
Bind my wandering heart to thee!
Prone to wander, LORD, I feel it;
Prone to leave the GOD I love—
Here's my heart, LORD, take and seal it,
Seal it from thy courts above.

END OF THE FOURTH AND LAST VOLUME.

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